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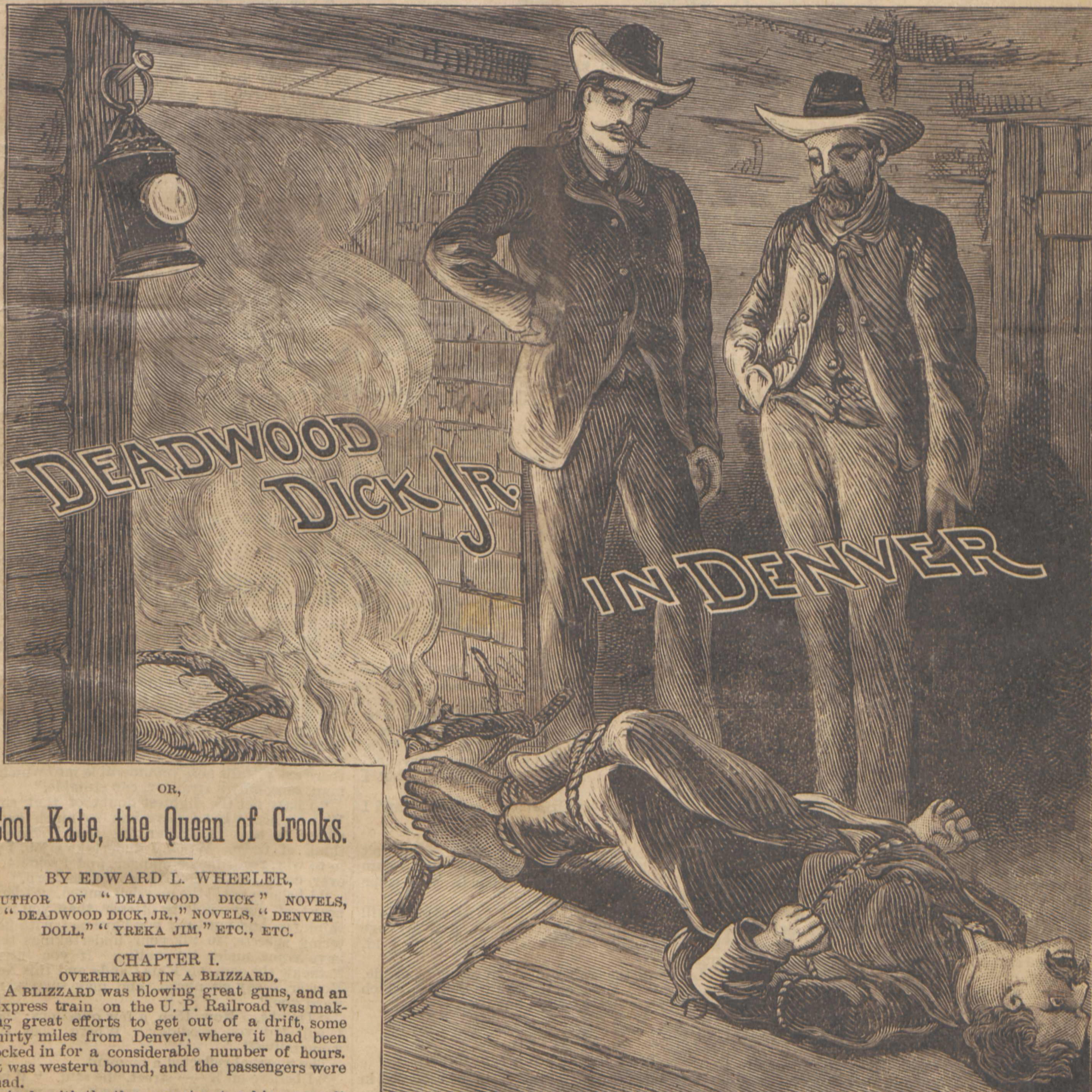
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OR,
Cool Kate, the Queen of Crooks.

BY EDWARD L. WHEELER,
AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK" NOVELS,
"DEADWOOD DICK, JR.", NOVELS, "DENVER
DOLL," "YREKA JIM," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

OVERHEARD IN A BLIZZARD.

A BLIZZARD was blowing great guns, and an Express train on the U. P. Railroad was making great efforts to get out of a drift, some thirty miles from Denver, where it had been locked in for a considerable number of hours. It was western bound, and the passengers were mad.

And, with the thermometer touching zero, it was little wonder, for there were no fires in the cars, and barely enough coal on the tender to

"STOP! STOP!" ROARED THE WRETCH. "I CAVE! I CAVE!" AT WHICH DEADWOOD DICK SMILED, WHILE HE AND JOE SADNS PROMPTLY DRAGGED THE MAJOR BACK FROM THE FIRE-TEST.

pull the train into Denver when the blizzard should abate.

Men, women and children were bundled up with such articles as were of avail for keeping warm, and there was more or less grumbling and discomfort on all sides.

At one end of one of the parlor cars a woman occupied a chair, and the upholstered seat adjoining, which backed against one of the private compartments, she had utilized as a foot-rest and to hold her satchel—thus virtually occupying two seats.

She was a striking-looking personage, too.

Although probably not over nineteen years of age, she looked a trifle older. She was tall, graceful of build, and possessed a face that would have been charming but for the half-insolent, independent expression it wore. The mouth was red-lipped and tempting, the eyes of great keenness, and the hair blonde. The hands were small, and of wax-like whiteness.

Her attire consisted of a plain black dress and a fur-lined circular, both of which were in singular contrast with the Indian moccasins on her feet, and the white sombrero upon her head.

Her hands fairly blazed with rings, and she carried a cane with a massive gold head.

As may be supposed, she was an object of curiosity to her fellow-passengers, but she appeared not to mind that fact, and occupied the two seats with the *sang froid* of one who owned the railroad itself.

She had boarded the train at Salina, Kansas, when all but these seats were occupied; but, as there had been no further demand for parlor-car accommodation, the conductor had not molested her.

Anon, as the blizzard howled in a higher key round the blockaded train, she would deliberately take a silver-mounted flask from her traveling-bag, imbibe a "bracer" of its contents, and then thrust the flask back into the bag.

While this action was a source of astonishment to the other female passengers, it was likewise a source of amusement to the men.

One individual, with a large corporosity and a nose that argued that he was not a St. John man from Kansas, was so presuming as to ask "would she sell a couple fingers of the disturbance?"

For answer, she gave him a withering look and averted her gaze from the car.

Another person we would call attention to, occupied a chair across the aisle.

He was a well-built young fellow of three or four and twenty, with a smooth, good-natured, intelligent face, a pleasant mouth, magnetic, dark eyes.

He was dressed in a serviceable business suit, with head and foot wear to correspond, and would not have been particularly noticeable, except for the fact that he wore a magnificent sealskin ulster, that must have cost a big sum of money.

While the eccentric young woman had repeatedly regarded the young man with unfeigned curiosity, the young man had quietly returned the compliment.

But no conversation had passed between them.

And now, with the blizzard blowing with increasing violence, there enters a third character, from one of the forward cars, whom we shall have to introduce to the reader.

He was evidently over sixty years of age, yet his form was straight and erect, and his step firm and strong. His face was good-natured in expression, the mouth in particular being good-humored, while his spectacled eyes were seemingly ever ready for a smile. His hair was snowy white, and beard he wore none, save a couple days' stubble.

His dress was that of a citizen from the rural districts, his suit being of plain gray homespun, his overcoat an ancient affair that sun and wind of many a season had faded, while his feet were clad in heavy stogy boots, and an out-of-date "plug" hat rested well back upon his head.

A stout hickory walking-stick, and an old-fashioned carpet-bag, completed his outfit.

Gazing over the tops of his spectacles, he made his way through the car, looking right and left for a seat.

The double one occupied by the eccentric young lady's feet, offered the only place to sit down.

Pausing, the gentleman from the rural districts took a casual squint at Miss Eccentric, and then observed:

"Young woman, aire that aire seat taken?"

"Don't it look like it?" coolly returned the young woman.

"Waal, I'll admit it do, summater, but then, I want some place tew set down, an' I consate the floor ar' the place for the sachel!"

"May be it is, but I allow you're in the wrong car, stranger. This happens to be the parlor-car, and it costs extra fare to ride here."

"Huh! you don't tell me?" and the old man took another view of the damsel. "Well, sis, I kinder reckon old Grandad Uriah Glen know a thing or two himself."

And with this he seized the sachel, chucked it on the floor, and comfortably settled himself upon the seat it had occupied.

"Rather rough weather we're havin'," he added, after taking off his spectacles and wiping them. "Tremendous bad weather, I'll swow!"

The other passengers, who had been hugely enjoying the incident, but had refrained from laughing, now burst into a roar.

As for the young woman, she glared at Grandad Glen a moment, as if she would like to annihilate him; then she, too, burst into a laugh.

"Well, you're a cool one," she said. "Where'd you blow down from, anyhow, daddy?"

"I came from New York, me gal."

"Do they raise many of your sort out there?"

"Yes, I reckon they do turn out a right smart crop. Ever been to New York?"

"Nary!"

"Then you belong out here in the West?"

"You bet—in Denver!"

"You don't say. Thar's where I'm headed fer, but the Lord knows whether we shall ever get there or not."

"Oh, we'll pull through all right when the storm abates."

"What mought your name be, young woman? I kinder allus like to know who I'm talkin' to, you see."

"My name is Kate—Cool Kate, for short—and I'm just as cool as my name implies," was the reply.

"Huh! you look it, my gal. An' might I ask hev you lived long in Denver?"

"About ten years."

"Then maybe ye kin give me a leetle advice. Ye see, it's this way: My gal, Goldie Glen, hev been visitin' a schoolmate in Denver fur the last couple o' months, and she have writ home what a fine place it is, and wiat chances there was to speckilate, an' she wanted me to come on West and try my hand; so, my old woman bein' dead, and havin' some spare cash put away, I concluded to come West and buy me what ye call a ranch. Do you know anything about sech matters?"

"Do I?" echoed Cool Kate, her interest seeming to be at once aroused. "Well, stranger, I should asseverate! I reckon I know every foot of ground in Colorado; an', what's more, I own a ranch myself, and it's a daisy, you bet!"

"Ye don't say! Now, how dear is good land out here?"

"Depends on location and soil. Land with two feet depth of soil as black as yer hat fetches purty good prices—say from ten to twenty dollars an acre. But there's plenty of cheaper, from fifty cents to five dollars."

"Good heavings! is that so? Darn my picture if I don't buy up all the land in the State," ejaculated Glen.

Cool Kate smiled.

"Not likely!" she said, "for the State is pretty well settled. There are, however, plenty of ranch lands for sale. I know of one already equipped ranch of a thousand acres that can be bought cheap. It is a day's horseback ride from Denver, and already contains a small village, through which a railroad is now being surveyed. I could buy it for ten thousand dollars, but I haven't the ducats."

"Buy it for me!" Uriah said, eagerly, "and I will give you a good commission."

"Have you got so much money, daddy?"

"Yes, and can get as much more. I haven't worked all my life fur nuthin'. When I cum to kick the bucket, my gal, Goldie, will come into more than ten times ten!"

"Very well; when we get to Denver, I will see a real-estate friend of mine, and arrange a purchase of Red Ranch," Cool Kate said, quietly.

Later on, the train pulled out of the blockade, and steamed along on its way to Denver, which lively city was reached in due time.

CHAPTER II.

DICK MAKES SOME INQUIRIES.

The conversation on the train, as recorded in the previous chapter, was listened to with more than usual interest by the young man who occupied the chair across the aisle from Cool Kate and Uriah Glen.

This young man, it may be well to state, right here, was none other than the famous detective, Deadwood Dick, Jr.

Among the first things he did, on his arrival in Denver, was to pay a visit to the city marshal, Mr. Wilder, which gentleman he found in his office on Pike street, and at liberty.

Introducing himself, Dick became seated, and entered into conversation, which ran something as follows, the marshal, a most genial gentleman, leading:

"Yes, Mr. Bristol, I am glad to welcome you to our city. I have frequently heard of you and your exploits, but never before had the pleasure of meeting you. Do you propose to remain with us for a time?"

"That depends somewhat on circumstances," Dick replied. "It was my intention to go further into the interior, but I may change my mind for the present. I called to ask a few questions, which may or may not involve the loss of a fortune."

"Go ahead, sir. Any information I can give you, you are welcome to, I assure you."

"I suppose you are in a measure acquainted with the State?"

"I know every inch of it, sir, having divided years in various sections of the State."

"You know of the Red Ranch, then, undoubtedly?"

"Red Ranch? There is no such ranch, to my knowledge. Why do you ask?"

"Because I overheard one party propose to sell another such a property, consisting of a thousand acres, for ten dollars per acre, a horse-day ride from Denver."

"A swindle, sir—an emphatic swindle! Tell me the circumstances."

"First, permit me to ask you a question: Do you know such a person as Cool Kate?"

"Yes, all I want to know of her. She's the devil's own imp, and has given us more trouble than a little. She is known as the queen of crooks, and wears the title right royally."

"I have seen her," Dick observed, "and it was my impression that she was pretty fly. Listen, and I will tell you the object of my questions."

He then related what he had overheard on the train, adding:

"It looks, decidedly, as if old Glen was going to be swindled by Cool Kate."

"Nothing more probable," the marshal replied. "A shrewder, cleverer woman of the class she represents, does not exist in this city to-day. Repeatedly has she been arrested, but in each instance did she prove an *alibi*, or squeeze out of the case against her in some way, by the aid of her unscrupulous lawyer. Fear she knows not, and she would as soon shoot a man as look at him. She's a tough girl, and men who have any regard for their safety or good character give her a wide berth, I can tell you. She has heelers and cappers everywhere she goes, and they're ready to kill a man who raises a hand against Kate Canda, or Cool Kate. She does pretty much as she pleases, and no one gainsays her."

"I think I may have occasion to do that little thing," Dick observed. "I shall look the matter up, and if I find she is trying to skin old Glen out of his money, as I candidly believe is her intention, I shall make it warm for her."

"Well, Bristol, I can but admire your grit; but, let me tell you one thing, as a friend and an officer: I do not in the least question your ability as a detective, but, bear this in mind—Denver isn't the wild, tough camp she was in the feverish days of Pike's Peak, and that now there are pitfalls here innumerable into which a man, especially a stranger, can stumble."

"I have not the slightest doubt of that, sir," Dick replied, "but I have had so much experience in that particular line that I scarcely think of them. When I undertake a job, I go in to win, regardless of danger, and I seldom, if ever, come out at the little end of the horn."

"I believe not!" the marshal smiled. "I have heard of your exploits oftener than you may think for, and must say you have met with flattering success, in all your undertakings that have come under my notice. If you intend to tackle the case of Kate Canda and this New Yorker, I say go ahead, and may success reward you."

"Thanks. Now, then, a few questions: then I will bid you good-day. Where does this woman live?"

The marshal reflected a moment.

"I believe on K— street," he said. "When she is at home, at all, she lives with her mother, a respectable widow. Wait a moment; the city Directory will tell."

He arose and entered a rear office, where he

remained for several minutes—longer Dick thought, than there was any occasion for.

Finally, on his return, he said:

"Yes, Mrs. Gertrude Canda, widow, resides at Number—K—street. If you want to see Kate, you may find her there, though the chances are she won't be at home. If you go gunning after her, my advice is for you to go armed, and do not let her get the drop on you!"

"I don't propose to; I simply want to find Miss Cool Kate, that I may also find Uriah Glen, and steer him out of her clutches. Well, good-day; I must be going."

"Good-day! Success to your plans. If you need any police assistance, come to me."

"Thanks! I will do so."

The detective then took his departure.

His next move was to seek the hotel where he had registered.

Here, from a goodly assortment of disguises, he selected one that he thought would best serve his purpose—that of a gentleman past fifty years of age, with iron-gray hair and side whiskers, broadcloth suit and shiny silk hat.

A touch here and there with a penciling brush and his appearance was so transformed that his most intimate friend would not have recognized him.

Surveying himself in a glass, he nodded his approval.

"Good. I reckon I'll pass," he observed "Now, then, for the residence of the Widow Canda, if possible to learn the whereabouts of the gullible Mr. Uriah Glen. Hope the old chap hasn't fallen into a trap so soon. If he hasn't, I may be able to prevent it. If he has, I'll make it hot for his swindlers, sure's my name is Deadwood Dick."

He then left the hotel, to prosecute his search for the residence of Mrs. Canda.

His personal appearance, as he sauntered along the street, was so distinguished, that he attracted more than passing notice, and in one instance he overheard the remark:

"There goes Colonel —," mentioning a prominent Washingtonian.

CHAPTER III.

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS.

WITH little difficulty, Dick got his bearings for K—street, and on the way chanced to overtake two prettily-attired young ladies, who were laughing and chatting, as young ladies are prone to do, when out for a promenade.

To his great surprise he overheard this exclamation:

"Why! Goldie Glen! Ain't you just awful?" Then, both laughed merrily.

It instantly occurred to Dick that one of the young ladies was none other than Uriah Glen's daughter.

Here, then, might be a chance to find out the whereabouts of the New Yorker.

Stepping alongside the girls, Dick raised his hat, and said in a pleasant tone:

"Beg pardon for intruding, ladies, but may I inquire which of you is Miss Glen, of New York?"

"I am that person," replied the taller of the two, a graceful, very pretty girl of eighteen. "Why do you ask, sir?"

"Because, I wished to inquire at which hotel your father is registered?"

"My father! Why he is not in Denver, is he?"

"Oh! yes. We both arrived at an early hour this morning, on the same train. I was a fellow-passenger of Mr. Glen's, and having lost track of him, would like to meet him again."

"Father in Denver, and I have not seen him? Why, that is strange! He surely would have come straight to the house, wouldn't he, Bertha?"

"I should think so," Bertha replied, "as you sent him full directions how to find it."

"I can't understand it!" Goldie said, in a troubled way. "I am sure he would have come direct to see me, as he thinks a great deal of me."

"It may be that he put up at one of the hotels," suggested Dick.

"True, if maybe so, but, I doubt it, for he has always had an aversion for hotel life. No, sir, I feel that something has happened to him."

"Oh! I guess not—hope not, I assure you. If I can be any service to you, miss, I will visit the hotels, and see if Mr. Glen is registered at any one of them!"

"Oh! sir, you are very, very kind; but, would it not be too much trouble?"

"Not at all! not at all. I am very anxious to see Mr. Glen again, myself. Where shall I bring word, after making the search?"

"To the residence of my friend here. She

lives at Number — B—street, if you will be so kind."

"Certainly. I will report, as soon as I have made thorough inquiries. In the mean time, quiet your fears, for it is probable your father will turn up soon, even if I don't succeed in finding him at any hotel!" and bidding the young ladies good-day, Dick hurried on.

"I'll leave the hotel search until I have visited the Widow Canda," he mused. "If old Glen is in trouble, and the chances are big that he is, why, I may strike a trail at the widow's quicker than I would at any of the hotels, where I seriously doubt if the old man is registered, after what his daughter stated. Jove! Miss Goldie Glen is a right nice-looking girl!"

The residence of the Widow Canda he found to be a pretty cottage, set down among a clump of trees, and all the surroundings were indicative of more than ordinary thrift.

The cottage was painted white, the blinds green, and the neat little fence was also white.

There was no door-bell, but a moderate knock brought a motherly-looking woman of fifty to the door.

"Are you Mrs. Gertrude Canda?" Dick queried, politely raising his hat.

"Yes, sir, I am Mrs. Canda," was the reply. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"I called to see your daughter, known as Cool Kate," Dick replied. "I met her some time ago, and commissioned her to make some inquiries for me in Denver, concerning a business matter, as she knew this city pretty well."

"Ah! I see. No, Cathy isn't in. She was here an hour ago, but left at once, as she had some business to attend to. My daughter, unfortunately, was brought up to nomadic habits, and I have no certain knowledge when she will be at home or when she will be away. Is your business important?"

"Quite so, as I have but very little time to spend in town. Could you not direct me so that I could find her? If so, I will cheerfully reward you, for, if I do not see her, to-day, it will be money out of my pocket."

"That is too bad!" the widow said, with solicitude. "Now, wait! let me think a moment. Ah! let me see: I think Cathy said she was going to Monk's—yes, I am sure she did."

"Monk's? Who is Monk?"

"He is an acquaintance of my daughter's—a real estate agent, I believe, although I really could not say for sure, as I have never seen him. He and my daughter are to be married in May, so Cathy says."

"Just so. Now, could you tell me where Mr. Monk's office is? I might find out something about your daughter's whereabouts, there."

"If I remember correctly, he is on P—street, near F—."

Thanking her, Dick slipped a silver dollar into her hand, which she did not refuse, and took his departure.

He started for P—street.

"Maybe I'm wrong!" he mused, "but I've a fair-sized idea that I struck the scent."

P—street reached, he had no difficulty in locating the office of

"MAJOR MIKE MONK,

REAL ESTATE,"

as a creaking sign announced.

It was an unpretentious, one-story affair, weather-beaten and unattractive, and probably had been "shoved up" as far back as the days of Pike's Peak excitement.

There was but one door and window fronting the street, and the latter was noticeably dirty.

Without knocking, Dick opened the door and walked into the office.

The interior proved to be in keeping with the exterior. The floor and walls were bare and dirty, and the ceiling minus half its plastering.

The only furniture was an old-fashioned high desk, with accompanying stool, a chair, and a long wooden settee.

There were two occupants of the office when Dick entered.

One was a burly individual, with red face, red hair, and a tremendous red mustache.

He looked decidedly more like a border ruffian than a peaceable real estate agent, as he sat perched upon the stool, behind his desk.

The second party was no one else than Cool Kate, the Queen of Crooks.

As Deadwood Dick entered the office, both parties stared at him curiously.

"Is Mr. Monk in?" the made-up Dick inquired.

"I'm him!" the red-faced individual declared impatiently. "What do you want?"

"Oh! I just dropped in to have a talk about some real estate I have to sell, that's all. No hurry, however;—don't let me interrupt you."

And seating himself on the settee, Dick picked up a paper and began to glance over its contents.

Cool Kate and her pal, disarmed of all suspicion, proceeded with their conversation.

"The plan is a good one," Monk assented, running his fingers through his bushy hair. "But, are you sure it will work? It is a piece of business I wouldn't like to engage in without positive show for a large profit."

"I've told you what your profit would be, and you know me;—my word is as good as the bank!" Cool Kate declared. "As for its working all right, never fear for that. It must and it shall work!"

"Very well. I will take a hand in the matter. When will you be ready?"

"As soon as you have the plans and specifications ready;—the sooner the better, for delays are dangerous."

"Very true. I guess I can have all in readiness for to-morrow morning. I will do the work this afternoon, and when you come, to-morrow, matters can be settled in a jiffy."

"All right. Be sure and have the prospectus strong, and there will be no hitch. I'm going up to the Red Light, now, and on my way back, if I'm in luck, I'll drop in."

"Correct! Do so."

Kate Canda then left the office, while Major Mike Monk turned to Deadwood Dick.

"Now, sir, I am at liberty to attend to you," he said.

"Thank you," Dick said. "Seeing by your sign that you dealt in real estate, I thought I'd drop in. My name is Calvin Clinch, and I am from Greeley. I have a couple of houses and lots there, which I wish to dispose of, as I propose to locate in Denver. I will allow you a commission of ten per cent., if you will find me purchasers for them."

"Can't accommodate you, boss. I have all the commission business I can attend to, at present. Besides, you're not likely to find Denver purchasers for Greeley property. However, I'll make a memorandum of the matter, and you can drop in again. I may hear of some one going to your town, and if so will refer them to you, without making any charge."

Thanking him, Dick was only too glad to leave the office so soon, for he was eager to follow the movements of Cool Kate.

CHAPTER IV.

DICK WORKS THE PUMP WITHOUT SUCCESS.

DICK went direct to his hotel, and exchanged his disguise for that of a dashing frontiersman, with long hair, mustache and goatee, while a buckskin jacket, white flannel shirt, corduroy breeches, top-boots and sombrero made up his attire.

The change in his appearance was so great, that he had no fear of detection.

He had privately made known to the hotel proprietor and his clerk, that he was a detective, and that no change in his appearance need excite their surprise or suspicion. Hence, he was free to come and go from the hotel, in whatsoever make-up he chose.

He had observed, before meeting Cool Kate at Monk's office, that the "Red Light" Saloon was on the next street from the hotel, and therefore, he had no need to inquire as to its location.

So that after he was disguised and armed, he made his way in the direction of the Red Light.

The day had advanced to nightfall, and already the street lamps were being lit.

The Red Light Saloon was ostensibly a drinking palace, (for it was elaborately fitted up,) but it was, in reality, a gambling den, run openly under the very eyes of the city officials.

The first floor front was used as a bar.

Passing through a screen door, at the back bar, you entered a mammoth, gorgeously decorated apartment. The floor was carpeted with genuine Wilton, of a beautiful pattern; the furniture was costly and luxurious; the walls were resplendent with paintings, and great glass chandeliers depended from the ceiling, and emitted a mellow radiance over all.

In the center of the great room a fountain bubbled over into a basin containing gold-fish and aquatic plants, including pond lillies, whose peculiar fragrance pervaded the room.

This room was chiefly devoted to poker, and other minor card games.

Up-stairs faro and keno held the boards.

On entering the Red Light, Deadwood Dick paused in the bar-room long enough to get a

cigar, and then sauntered on into the gaming-parlor.

He was somewhat surprised at the gorgeousness of the place, and after sauntering about for a few minutes, seated himself at an unoccupied table.

Most of the many tables in the room were occupied by card parties, and it was noticeable that there were quite a number of women engaged in games of chance.

Among them, however, Dick failed to see the object of his search, Cool Kate.

He waited for upward of an hour, and then, growing impatient, was considering the advisability of searching elsewhere, when lo! the Queen of Crooks entered the parlor.

There was no change in her appearance from that in which Dick had first seen her.

She saw Dick almost as soon as she entered the room, and after giving him a critical survey passed on.

Directly, however, she came back and approached him.

"Ever flip the pasteboards, pardner?" she questioned.

"Sometimes," Dick replied.

"Thought so. Most of you 'way-outs' play cards. What d'ye say to a game of poker, dollar a crack, just to pass away the time?"

"I'm agreeable," Dick replied, and Cool Kate seated herself at the table, opposite him.

This was just the opportunity Dick could most have wished, as perhaps he could draw out from the Queen of Crooks the information he most desired.

"By the way, before we begin, let's have a bottle of wine," Dick said, and he gave the order to the waiter who had just brought the cards and chips.

This liberality on his part seemed to please Miss Kate, for she said:

"I see there's none of the 'small' about you, pard. Might I ask where you hail from?"

"Oh! my general hang-out is up-country, in Dakota, but I got into trouble up there for poppin' over a couple of galoots, and had to mazourka out of gun-shot. The cusses war tryin' to induce my horse to foller 'em, and I argued et wasn't best, tho' one on 'em was mayor o' the camp; so they persisted, an' I plugged 'em!"

Of course there was not a word of truth in this statement, but as it was made for a "business" purpose, the "profession" would justify it.

"Bully for you!" Kate exclaimed. "I admire your grit, I do! If you get into any trouble while you're here in Denver, just send for me, and I'll snake you out. I'm Cool Kate, and they all know me, and fear me, too. I'm as good as you'll find 'em, and I kin be as bad as ye find 'em!"

"Oh! I guess I won't get into trouble here, and if I do, I can handle myself!"

"You look as if you could! I ain't one that's overburdened with scruples, like some folks, but I'll be careful not to do anything out o' the way to incur your enmity. Ah! here's the wine!"

The wine had arrived, and Dick poured out a brimming glass for his guest and one for himself.

"Here's a go!" he said, and they drank.

The wine was excellent.

"I never drink but one glass of wine at a sitting," Dick observed, "and so I will leave you to finish the bottle!"

"Oh! I can do that!" Kate assured, with refreshing frankness. "Wine is just like water, to me. It takes real bug-juice to put an edge on me, ye see!"

And, judging by the delicate tint on the cheek, Dick came to the conclusion that she had "had an edge on," on more than one festive occasion.

"How many chips do you want?" Dick asked, as he drew the box toward him.

"Twenty dollars' worth!" and the Queen of Crooks tossed a twenty-dollar gold piece upon the table.

Dick, accordingly, dealt out twenty ivories.

He also took twenty, himself, and put the forty dollars in the box.

The game then began.

Little was said during the first half-hour, during which luck ran in favor of Kate, Dick having had to buy another batch of chips.

By the expiration of the half-hour, however, the woman had consumed the wine, and Dick promptly ordered another.

"I'll make her tongue move," he mused, "if it costs me every cent I've got with me."

They played on, and Dick's luck began to change.

Also, a few sips from the new bottle, tended to loosen the cords that had hitherto held Cool Kate's tongue a prisoner.

"Oh! I ain't no slouch!" she declared, as Dick raked in a good-sized pot. "I don't squeal, when I lose. I ain't rich, like some folks, but I mighty quick will be. I've got an old jay I'm goin' to skin out of a boodle, soon, and a fat one, too. I tell ye, it takes Cool Kate to work these old misers out o' their ducats, an' don't you forget, either!"

"Good for you!" rejoined Dick, "and may I ask who is this old codger you're going to do up to the queen's taste?"

"Oh! he's an old Alec from New York, named Glen. He's got a fat roll, and if I don't get it, you can call me mud!"

"Going to play him for a sucker, eh?"

"That's just what I am, you bet!" and she gave a tipsy chuckle.

The wine, evidently, was fast getting the better of her.

"I sized you up for being a pretty fly gal!" Dick complimented. "Where is your pigeon that you are going to trap?"

"Oh! I know where he is," was her evasive answer. "I know, and that's enough."

Evidently she was not so dazed but what she knew enough not to let her tongue tell too much.

They played on.

At intervals Dick, by various ways, tried to get her to disclose the whereabouts of her intended victim, but in vain. Although she got more and more boozy, she was, on that one point, wary to a fault.

Evidently she had formed a resolution not to give away the whereabouts of Uriah Glen, and that resolve instinctively controlled her, when her other senses were in a maudlin state.

At length, she fell asleep in her chair, and disappointed and disgusted, Dick arose and left the Red Light, considerably the winner.

"She means to keep her secret, drunk or sober, does she?" he muttered. "We'll see about that. She's too drunk to visit Glen, tonight, but there's a morrow, just the same!"

Had he known that, after his departure from the saloon, Cool Kate arose from her apparent slumber, with a triumphant smile upon her face, no doubt he would have had a different opinion of the party he was dealing with!

CHAPTER V.

ARRESTED.

YES, Dick had scarcely left the Red Light Saloon, when Cool Kate opened her eyes, and immediately was upon her feet.

"So ho! my fine fellow, you didn't find out what you were so anxious to know, did you! I'd just like to know who you are, and I will, too. You're a sweet-scented pill, and all your quizzing wasn't for nothing. I can tell you another thing, too, that perhaps you think I don't know. That long hair and sweeping mustache are all humbug. Cool Kate can get pretty full, and not be a fool, either. I think I'll just follow you, and see where you go!"

When Dick emerged from the Red Light, he found that the night was dark, and but for the street-lamps, it would have been somewhat difficult to have made his way to his hotel.

The snow, too, was now falling in blinding clouds.

"It makes me provoked to be baffled!" Dick muttered, as he trudged along, "and I feel that I have been baffled, to-night. Cool Kate told the truth when she said she was no slouch. She is both a clever and a dangerous woman, and the sooner she is behind the bars, the better it will be for the public in general.

"From what I heard in Monk's office, I infer that the latter is going to draw up a map to be shown to old Glen, depicting the great natural advantages of Red Ranch, in order to excite the old man's enthusiasm, and accelerate his speed in shelling out his dollars, for—nothing! I'd like to see the map, by Jove! I'll wager it will be a wonder, in its way!"

To reach the hotel by a near route, he had to pass the office of Major Monk.

As he came to it, he involuntarily paused—just why, he could hot have explained.

The little shanty—for it was nothing else—stood by itself, on a lot that was much too big for it, and looked decidedly forsaken.

"I wonder if Monk left his diagram of Red Ranch in the office?" Dick mused. "I'd give a deal to know. If there was a door or window in the rear, blame me if I wouldn't know, too! It wouldn't be a crime to enter the office and take a look at the paper!"

He peered carefully around, through the thickly falling snow, but couldn't see anybody.

"I'll not force an entrance!" he decided, "but if a rear door or window should be unlocked, into that office I go!"

He left the sidewalk, and made his way along the side of the building to the rear, keeping close watch as he did so.

Sure enough, a door and window were in the rear of the building, and neither looked as if they would withstand much of a siege.

Dick first tried the window, but it was fastened, on the inside.

He next tried the door, and was a trifle startled when it opened readily.

For a moment he hesitated about entering.

There was a small rear room to the office, and this door opened into it. The office itself, lay beyond.

Dick entered the rear room, and struck a match.

The apartment contained a chair and table, and on the latter was a candlestick, containing a half-burned candle.

When the match went out, Dick stole on into the office.

A gas-lamp across the street sent its rays in through the window, enabling Dick to find the desk, without difficulty.

Feeling over its top, his hand came in contact with what proved to be a large sheet of paper. This he decided to examine; so taking it, he retired to the rear room, and closed the door between it and the office.

Then, lighting the candle, he seated himself, and spread the paper out upon the table.

It was indeed a diagram, or rough map, indicating the Red Ranch—a railway station on it, roads, trails, the various kinds of lands, etc., etc., with Denver in the distance.

It was not without great amusement that Dick examined the crude delineation.

"Well, may I be shot, if that don't beat the bun!" he said. "So, chat's the sort of fairy land they're going to palm off on Uncle Uriah, in exchange for his cool ten thousand dollars? Well, not much they ain't, not if I know myself! Why, confound the infernal rascals, where they've mapped out Red Ranch to be is nothing but mountains. The schemers ought to be lynched. Even lynching is too good for them! But wait! I'll knock their little game in the head, if I can only find old Glen."

"One would not think that a man who was smart enough to accumulate the amount of money Glen has would be so gullible as to be taken in by a total stranger. But, then, there must be some fools in the world."

"Well, I suppose I better return this valuable document to where I found it, and then get out of here before I am discovered. I don't exactly fancy being hauled up before a police justice on the charge of burglary!"

Rising, he re-entered the office and deposited the document upon the desk in the same position he found it.

"I reckon Mr. Monk won't know any one has been monkeyin' with his artistic piece of map-making!" Dick chuckled. "If he does suspect, what of it? He won't know who was the intruder."

He then returned to the rear room.

Blowing out the light, he left the shanty, and was about to close the door after him, when a heavy hand was laid upon his arm and a gruff voice exclaimed:

"Ha! ha! my daisy, so I've caught you at it, have I? Well, come along. You're my mutton, for sure!"

And to his chagrin, Dick found himself in the grasp of a burly policeman.

CHAPTER VI.

A BOLD BREAK FOR LIBERTY.

ALTHOUGH Dick's surprise at this sudden and unexpected capture was great, he was in nowise alarmed.

"What were you doing in that office?" the officer demanded, maintaining a firm grip.

"By the right vested in me as a United States detective, I went in there to secure evidence to lead to the arrest of a daring forger!" Dick answered, with composure.

"I suppose you found it?" the policeman said, sarcastically.

"Yes. I did!"

"Oh! yes, of course you did. Hoo! You can't stuff me up with such trash as that! You're no more a United States detective than my big toe is."

"If you will take me beneath a lamp-light, I will prove to you whether I am or not."

"Humph! I don't care if you're President o' the United States, or not. I caught you in a burglarious act, and I'm going to run you int' So come along!"

"Oh! I'm willing to go," Dick replied, cheerily. "When I get to the station-house, all I'll

have to do will be to send for the city marshal. He knows me, and he'll set things to rights."

"Yes, he will!" the officer retorted, in a tone of incredulity. "Oh! I've heard crooks talk before, me man. Ye can't work off any o' your ghost stories on me."

"No one is trying to. I'm perfectly willing to accompany you, but there's no need of your trying to crush my arm, as I can see."

At this the officer to some extent relaxed his vise-like grip, and the two men passed down alongside the office, to the street.

As they reached it, Dick heard a voice ask:

"Did you get him, Joe?"

"You bet I did," was the reply.

The next instant Dick made out who the speaker was.

It was Cool Kate!

"Ha! I owe this to you, do I?" he demanded. Cool Kate laughed, mockingly.

"Well, yes, in a measure," she acknowledged, in triumph. "I sized you up as a crook, the first I saw of you, and made up my mind to follow you, and see what sort of a game you were up to. So I got Joe, here, and we got you dead to rights. The State will furnish you with work and grub for a while to come!"

"You hussy!" cried Dick, his temper giving entirely away—something unusual with him, "it is you who are the crook, and well you know it, and it was out of fear that I was about to make trouble for you that you dogged me. But, wait! I'll be more than even with you! I'll frustrate your humbug Red Ranch scheme of swindling Uriah Glen, just so sure as my name is—"

Dick stopped abruptly.

He had come near "putting his foot in it," sure enough.

It would not do to betray his real name while under arrest.

"Just as sure as your real name is—what?" taunted Cool Kate. "Dassen't speak out your real name, dare you? Oh! of course not! Jailbirds never do *that*. Ha! ha! ha! Well, so long! I must be going. I'll be at your hearing to-morrow, and perhaps I can give some interesting testimony. Good-by, sonny!"

And with a sardonic laugh the Queen of Crooks hurried off in one direction, while the officer led Dick in another.

Dick could have killed the woman with a good heart, he thought, so greatly was he enraged at her audacity and temporary triumph over him.

It was not so much at his own situation he was chagrined as at the probability that old Glen would be swindled out of his money, there being no one to warn him of the fraud.

The snow was coming down in blinding clouds, and it was impossible to see two yards in front.

As the two men trudged along a desperate resolve entered Dick's mind. If he could break away from the policeman, and make a run for it, he was pretty sure he could escape under cover of the storm, swift runner that he was. While, on the other hand, the policeman was big, and clumsy, and did not look as if he could get over the ground much faster than a snapping-turtle.

As the two walked side by side, the officer's right hand clutched Dick's left arm, leaving his right free, but the clutch was vise-like.

Suddenly a thought occurred to Dick.

"I bet I'll make him let go!" he mused.

In his right-hand pants pocket was his trusty jack-knife, with its spring blade. Reaching his hand into the pocket, he grasped the weapon firmly, then withdrew his hand.

The policeman was shuffling clumsily along through the rapidly-deepening snow, grumbling at the storm and the hard walking.

Suddenly he gave a yell of pain, followed by fearful anathemas.

And little wonder, for, with a quick movement, Dick had jabbed the blade of his knife into the policeman's arm!

Of course the grip "let go" without ceremony, while Richard darted away like the wind.

It was several moments ere the officer comprehended the true state of affairs; then, swearing fiercely, he started in pursuit.

Dick ran like a deer for several blocks, then slackened his gait and made a roundabout circuit to his hotel, where he immediately sought his room.

"Well, I got out of that scrape luckily," he soliloquized. "I wonder how the cop feels about this time? I hated to prick him, but it was a case of necessity. I suppose there'll be a great hullabaloo over the matter, and a fellow about my size will be particularly wanted. But let 'em search! They'll never suspect my iden-

tity, and I can have the novel pleasure of joining the searchers and searching for myself. It isn't every one who can do that!"

And Dick laughed heartily at the situation as he retired for the night.

CHAPTER VII. INTERVIEWING GOLDIE.

DEADWOOD DICK arose at an early hour the next morning, and after making a careful toilet enjoyed a hearty breakfast in his room.

He had not fully made out his plans for the day; but, first of all, he intended to visit all the hotels of any account and examine their registers, and report to Miss Goldie Glen.

The day was an unpleasant one, the snow having turned to rain, making it very sloppy under foot.

Nevertheless, Dick set forth on his errand, and visited every hotel that boasted of a register, but no such name as that of Uriah Glen was to be found.

Finally, cold, tired, and thoroughly disgusted, he sought the residence at the address Goldie had given him, and found it to be a fine stone in a select quarter, and evidently the house of a wealthy family.

Ringing, his summons was answered by a colored servant to whom he gave his card for Miss Glen, whereupon he was requested to step into the parlor and be seated.

He was not disguised now as he had been when he first met Goldie, and he was curious to know how she would receive him.

After a delay of some ten or fifteen minutes she came tripping into the parlor.

She was attired in a plain black habit, with a milk-white rose pinned at her throat. Her hair was becomingly arranged after the prevailing fashion.

Her face was paler than when Dick first saw her, and her eyes indicated that she had been weeping.

"Did you wish to see me, sir?" she asked, pausing just within the parlor and surveying Dick rather doubtfully.

"If you please, Miss Glen," Dick replied, rising and bowing. "Pray be seated," and he handed her a chair.

She sat down, and Dick resumed his seat upon the sofa.

"I presume you do not recognize me," Dick observed.

"No, sir, I do not."

"I am the one who met you on the street yesterday, and spoke to you concerning the arrival of your father in Denver."

A look of incredulity swept over her face.

"But, sir, I don't understand. That gentleman was much older and altogether a different-looking person from you."

"Very true. I was in one of my many disguises then. If you will look at my card again, you will perceive that, professionally, I am a detective."

"Oh, I see, now. Oh, sir, have you come to tell me about poor papa? I have been so worried!"

"Miss Glen, I have made a canvass of all the hotels, but cannot find your father's name upon any of the registers. That he is in the city, however, and alive and well, I can assure you. Purely out of interest in the old gentleman, I have taken the case in hand, and by putting this and that together, have elicited enough facts to know that Mr. Glen has fallen into the hands of a party of sharpers, who hope to swindle him out of his money by inducing him to purchase a worthless piece of land. It is these same sharpers who, at present, have the old gentleman in their keeping, and, as they hope to work upon his good nature and skin him out of his money, they are very naturally treating him to the best the land affords. So you need not fear for his personal safety, for as long as the old gent has a dollar he'll not be ill-treated, rest assured of that."

"But where is my father?" asked Goldie, wringing her hands in despair.

"That remains to be found out," Dick replied. "I have not got that far yet. I have already spotted one of the actors in the conspiracy, but, to use a vulgarism, she is very 'fly,' and I have gained but little information from her. I feel almost positive she has a confederate in the game, and that it is this confederate who has your father in charge."

"But do you think for a moment, Mr. Bristol, that papa wouldn't have come and seen me first, before surrendering himself to the hospitality of strangers?"

Dick shrugged his shoulders.

"That's hard to say," he replied. "Your

father is getting old, and the older people get, as a general thing, the more susceptible they are to undue influence. This fact I observed while on the cars coming to Denver, when your father picked up an acquaintance with a young woman."

"My father picked up an acquaintance with a young woman?"

Goldie looked astonished.

"Just as I have said," Dick assured, "and one whom I know to be a crooked character. Indeed, she is known to the police of Denver as the Queen of Crooks. She calls herself Cool Kate, and she's a cunning and at the same time a dangerous woman. And it is this same Cool Kate who is one of the conspirators, whose aim is to swindle your father out of his money."

Dick further elucidated by relating what he had overheard on the train, and what had occurred since.

Goldie listened both with interest and anxiety.

"Oh! dear!" she exclaimed, when Dick had finished. "I fear I shall never see my poor father again!"

"Entertain no such fear as that, Miss Glen. I will find your father, never fear, but it may not be until after he has lost his money. I hope, however, to find him in time to checkmate these villainous conspirators."

"Oh! you are very kind, sir, and if you will try hard to find papa, I will pay you for it," Goldie said, taking a well-filled purse from her pocket.

"Put up your purse, Miss Glen!" Dick hastened to say. "Under no circumstances should I think of accepting pay for what I have not done. I intend to spend a few days in Denver, anyhow, and if I can be of any service either to yourself or your father, it will be quite gratuitous. By the way, Miss Glen, do you know if there is any one, in Denver, whom your father may have known at a previous period?"

Goldie reflected.

"I know of but one person—a Mr. Rice!" she replied, after a moment.

"Mr. Rice, eh? What is Mr. Rice's given name?"

"Rufus."

"Ab! Now, where did your father know Mr. Rice?"

"In New York. He and father were partners in the produce and commission business for awhile, but, finally, there was some misunderstanding about the accounts of the firm, and this was followed by a dissolution of partnership."

"Just so. I am very glad you told me this, Miss Glen, for I may be able to make something out of it. Did your father and Mr. Rice part friends?"

"For all I know, I believe the dissolution was by mutual agreement. This was five years ago, and I was too young at the time to know much about business matters."

"I see. Did Mr. Rice come West after the dissolution?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are sure he is in Denver?"

"Yes, sir. We met on the street, one day, and he recognized me, and inquired after papa's health!"

"Did you mention that your father contemplated coming West?"

"I believe I did. But, why all these funny questions, Mr. Bristol?"

"Detectives are privileged characters, as regards asking questions," Dick smiled. "I have but a couple more to ask. What business is Rice in?"

"I do not know."

"Do you know where he resides?"

"I do not."

Promising to do his best to find Mr. Glen, the detective bade Goldie good-day and took his departure.

CHAPTER VIII.

A QUESTION CONCERNING RUFUS.

AFTER leaving Goldie Glen, Dick Bristol went back to the hotel. What he had heard concerning Rufus Rice, had aroused a new train of thought in his mind.

This Rice may be a rascal," he mused, "and if so, and he bears no good feeling toward old Glen, what is more probable than that he took advantage of Glen's visit to Denver to lay for him? I must give this attention."

He made inquiry of the hotel clerk concerning Rufus Rice, but that austere and interesting individual had never heard of such a party, but referred his guest to the city Directory, chained to the office writing-table.

Consulting this Directory, Dick found the following:

"Rice, Rufus; artist; h. 150 M—street."

Just below this was another:

"Rice, Rufus; laborer; b. 7 Jones street."

And still another:

"Rice, Rufus T.; h. 203 S—street."

"Well, by Jove! Denver, for a city of its size, has got more than its share of Rufus Rices!" Dick mused. "The question is, which Rufus Rice is the Rufus I want to investigate? Let me see: There's Rufus, the artist. Miss Glen gave me no reason to suppose that her father's ex-partner was a paint-slinger.

"Then, there's Rufus Rice, laborer. That don't sound like my man.

"Then there is Rufus number three. No calling is assigned to him, and I infer, accordingly, that he is one of two things—either a gentleman or a loafer, or possibly a combination of both. In either instance, he seems to answer nearest to the man I want.

"I want the Rufus who was formerly Uriah Glen's partner; I want to enter his house and see if Glen is not a guest there. There being three men of the name in the town affords a capital opportunity, excuse or cover, for, after I have made what investigations I want, I can excuse myself on the plea that I haven't found the Rice I am looking for!"

That afternoon as it was sloppy under foot, Dick called a carriage, and, half an hour later, was set down in front of the S—street house, which was but an ordinary one-and-a-half story frame.

In answer to his ring, a mulatto woman opened the door.

"Is Mr. Rice in?" Dick asked.

"No, sah, he isn't, but I 'spes him eb'ry minnit. Will you walk in, sah, an' take a seat in de parlor? When de mass'r comes, I'll tell him dar's some one to see him!"

Thanking her, Dick bade the driver wait, then accepted the invitation, and was shown into the parlor, while the negress vanished.

In the parlor another surprise greeted the detective. The "parlor" was nothing more nor less than a cleverly fitted-up gaming room.

There were a number of handsome card tables a faro table, a keno and roulette layout, and other gambling devices and appliances were to be seen on either hand.

Dick seated himself at one of the tables, and to pass away time began running over the deck of cards.

"So, this is the reason why Rufus T. Rice is not assigned a calling!" Dick muttered. "Pretty good reason, too. There's a method in some kinds of madness, 'tis true. I am afraid this Rice ain't the man I'm looking for!"

The minutes dragged by, and by the time half an hour had been exhausted in waiting, Dick was pretty well out of patience.

At last, however, the parlor door opened, and a man entered.

He was tall and thin, but of wiry build, and looked as if he might be a hard man to handle, in a rough-and-tumble fight.

He was dark complexioned, with dark, curling hair, a heavy black mustache, and a rather pleasant mouth, which, when he spoke, exposed to view an upper row of pearly teeth. His age was about forty-five. He was not a bad looking man—at any rate, not a vicious-looking one.

Dick arose, immediately upon his entrance.

"Is this Mr. Rufus Rice?" he asked, pleasantly.

"That's my name," the man replied, surveying the detective with manifest curiosity.

"Just so. My name is Parker, and I hail from New York. That was formerly your home, if I am not greatly mistaken?"

"Yes, I used to live there."

"Yes, so Brown was telling me, before I started West. I asked him if I'd find any York State people, out in this country, and he says, 'Why, yes, dead loads of 'em. If you stop off in Denver, go see Rufe Rice, No. 203 S—street. He's an old New York boy, and will be glad to see any one from the East!'

"And so I am!" heartily declared Rice, his whole demeanor undergoing a change through the agency of Dick's well concocted yarn. "Glad to see you, of course—shake!"

They shook hands, and then Rice continued:

"But, who is Brown you speak of? I don't seem to recall him;" and the gambler scratched his head in perplexity.

"Oh! perhaps not. He's a queer limb, is Brown, and he has a new name for nearly every town he visits—and a girl, too, for that matter. Tall fellow—sandy hair and mustache—good

dresser—regular lady-killer, you know! Traveling salesman for a Broadway wholesale clothing firm."

"I think I remember him!" Rice said.

"Plays a pretty stiff game of poker, doesn't he?"

"Yes; that's the very man!" Dick hastened to assure. "What name did he go under here?"

"Booth?"

"Ha! ha! ha! That's also his Toledo alias. Well, Brown is a good fellow, but, if he don't moderate his gait, wine and women will fetch him, sooner or later."

"Do you ever play poker, Mr. Parker?" Rice asked, abruptly changing the subject.

"Oh, yes, frequently."

"Then, what do you say to dismissing your carriage, and stopping awhile. It's a nasty day outside, and you can't do much business; and when you want another carriage, I can call one for you." He evidently mistook Dick for a "drummer."

"Certainly," Dick assented. "I'm not the one to take a shingle from a man's roof. I'll dismiss cabby, and while you're about it hunt around and see if you can't scare up a bottle of wine."

"I guess I can," Rice grinned, brightening up in anticipation of having caught onto a "sucker." "I generally keep a taste on hand, for my own use, if nothing more, you see!"

Dick went out and paid and dismissed the driver.

"I have found my Rufus!" he mused, as he returned to the house, "and, now, the next thing is to find Uriah Glen, or some trace of him. We'll see whether I have any better success pumping Rice than I had with Cool Kate. I feel that Rice and the Queen of Crooks are somewhat affiliated, and are working together in this scheme against Glen. I may be mistaken, but I am not inclined to give up the idea, until I find positively that I am wrong. One thing is evident, however; Glen is not about Rice's shebang, unless, mayhap, he is held a prisoner in some other part of the house. But, I hardly think the conspirators would dare adopt so bold a course as that. I'll hang around here awhile, and may be I can strike a clew."

CHAPTER IX.

CLEANED OUT."

WHEN Dick entered the parlor, Rufus Rice had already produced a bottle of Piper Sec, which he now proceeded to open.

They sat down at the table, and, after a glass of the sparkling apiece, cards and poker-chips were produced, and a game started, no limit to the betting being declared.

Dick was "well heeled," so far as funds were concerned, having put a goodly sum of money in his clothes that morning before leaving the hotel, and made up his mind not to let Rice bluff him if he lost every cent.

The game started off with small hands, and the betting was light and interest in the game lacking; therefore, the detective worked in a little conversation as by-play.

"How long ago did you live in New York, Mr. Rice?"

"Oh! a matter of five years ago."

"You were in partnership with Mr. Uriah Glen, I understand?"

"Yes," Rice replied briefly, as he raked in a pot.

"Pretty nice old fellow, eh?" Dick pursued.

"None better above ground. Do you know him?"

"I am slightly acquainted with him. We came to Denver on the same train. Have you seen him since he arrived?"

"Yes. I chanced to be at the depot when he arrived, and I immediately gobbled him up and forced him to spend last night with me. I simply wouldn't take no for an answer. And a capital time we had, too, talking over old times and drinking wine. I never knew there was so much in the old man until last night. He's quite a boss, once he gets a-going."

"Yes, I judged he might be. Where is he now?"

"Oh! I put him in a hack about half an hour before you came, and sent him off to see his daughter, who is stopping in another part of the city. Charming girl, is Miss Glen. Ever see her?"

"I've met her a couple of times," Dick replied.

In such a straightforward manner had Rice answered the questions put to him, that, but for one thing, Dick would have been half inclined to believe him.

That "thing" was the map or diagram in Mike Monk's office, which, together with what

Dick had overheard, clearly demonstrated that there was a conspiracy against Uriah.

Such a conspiracy being a fact, and taking into consideration that Glen had been spirited away to Rice's house immediately upon his arrival in Denver, was there not good reason to believe that Rice was a party to the conspiracy?

Besides the hall door, there was another door, leading from the front room into an adjoining room. He had noticed it, when he first entered the parlor, and it was then closed, but now, during the progress of the game, he made the discovery that it was about a foot ajar.

"Is some one in the next room, playing the spy on me?" he wondered.

The game ran along about even, and by mid-afternoon neither of the players could brag of being ahead.

"Well! well! we certainly each hold our own, and that's all!" Rice grunted. "To tell the truth, when we started, I rather expected to do you!"

"And, to tell the truth, when we started, I made up my mind not to let you," Dick replied. "So, if you really intend to do me, you'd best be expeditious about it, for I must soon be going."

"Oh, don't be in a hurry!" Rice urged, in a tone that caused Dick to look up from his cards. "One or the other of us ought to win something before we quit. Throw away that stub, and we'll try a couple of my cigars. Maybe that will make a change in the luck. Or, would you prefer some more wine? I have some A1 sherry."

"No, no! I prefer a cigar," Dick hastened to say, while to himself he added: "You don't get none of your drugged sherry down my throat, Mr. Rufus Rice!"

Rice rapped upon the table and called out:

"Renee! Renee!"

In answer to the summons, an old woman came from the adjoining room—a wretched-looking old creature.

"Fetch two cigars and some matches," ordered Rice, and the woman toddled away.

She soon returned and gave Rice two cigars, and he in turn handed one to Deadwood Dick.

"You'll find that something above high-water mark," he observed. "When I can't smoke a first-class article, I don't smoke at all."

Almost in the same breath he turned to the old woman and said, interrogatively:

"Back yet?"

The old woman shook her head in the negative, and retired to the next room.

Rice gnawed his lip a minute, then lit his cigar, and resumed playing.

They had hardly resumed playing, when a messenger-boy entered, and handed Rice a dispatch. He opened it, glanced at its contents, then tore it into bits, and threw it on the floor.

He then gave the boy half a dollar, saying:

"There's no answer; you can go," and the boy went.

"I'd go a ten-dollar note to know what was in that telegram," thought Dick. "I'll—"

Here Rice interrupted his reflections.

"We'll play this hand out," he said, dealing the cards, "and then I shall have to quit, as I am summoned to the bedside of a dying friend."

"Very well. I am ready to quit," Dick said, lighting the cigar that had been given him.

The hand proved to be the best either had held, evidently, for the betting was the heaviest yet made.

There were three hundred dollars in the pot, when Rice "called" Dick, and the latter won with three aces and a pair of kings—the biggest "full" in the deck.

"There, I guess that will do," Rice decided. "It's quite enough to lose at one afternoon's sitting. Shall I order a hack for you, Mr. Parker?"

There was no answer from Deadwood Dick.

He had sunk back in his arm-chair, pale as death; his eyes closed and his chin dropped forward upon his chest.

He was insensible!

A villainous chuckle escaped the lips of Rufus Rice.

"The cigar fetched him, if he wouldn't have the sherry!" he soliloquized. "Kate said perhaps there'd be a detective poking around, inquiring for old Glen, and I've caught one, for sure! I reckon, Mr. Parker, you won't have an appetite for any more Rice, for some time to come. In the mean time, I'll take possession of whatever you may have, of value, and hie myself to other fields and pastures new."

The villain proceeded to "go through" Dick's pockets, in the most approved fashion.

First the money, amounting to over two

thousand dollars, was appropriated; then followed the detective's watch, his diamond pin, and his diamond ring.

His papers, with the exception of one of his cards, were left unmolested.

Leaving his victim insensible in the chair, Rice then coolly proceeded to envelop himself in his overcoat, and, taking a last look around the room, he put on his hat, and left the house, as if nothing out of the common had happened.

CHAPTER X.

URIAH'S AIR-CASTLE SUFFERS COLLAPSE.

WHEN Deadwood Dick awoke to consciousness, he found himself in utter darkness. His head ached fearfully, and it was several minutes ere he could recall what had occurred prior to his losing his senses. Then, it all gradually came back to him.

Feeling about him, he found that he was still seated in the arm-chair, and the table was in front of him.

Exploring his pockets, he discovered that his money and watch were gone.

"By Heaven! I have been drugged and robbed!" he exclaimed, "and Rufus Rice is the man that did it. Confound it, was there ever such an idiot as I? That cigar was drugged, beyond a doubt. If ever a man ought to be kicked for a cur I'm the one. I wonder if I have a match? I must get out of this den, somehow!"

In his hip-pocket, he found a box of matches, and striking one, he lit the gas, there being a chandelier directly over his head.

The room was so softly carpeted that a foot-fall made scarcely a sound; nevertheless, Dick exercised extreme caution in moving about, for he did not wish to arouse any one who might be in the room adjoining.

Tip-toeing over to the door that opened out into the hall, he tried it. To his dismay, he found that it was locked.

"No gittee outee that way!" he muttered, grimly. "I reckon I won't try the other door. It might open into the old hag's boudoir, and then there would be the deuce to pay. I wonder how the windows will pan out."

There were two front windows to the room, opening out upon a little piazza. They were, he found, fastened on the inside by a sash-catch only, so in a few moments Dick had let himself out of the house, and was hurrying away along the street.

He had no idea what time it was, but judged that it must be after midnight, for the street was deserted, and there were no lights in the windows of the houses.

It was a good long walk to the business part of the town, where the hotel was located, and the walking was execrable, but he struck out at a quick step.

"Well, I'm out, counting money, watch and diamonds, about twenty-two hundred dollars by this experience," he muttered, in a rather glum way. "I'm inclined to believe I'd have been doing an act of charity to myself if I had permitted old Glen to go ahead and lose his ten thousand dollars."

At last, with wet feet and dampened ardor, Deadwood Dick reached the hotel, only to find that it was three o'clock in the morning.

He at once sought his room, tumbled into bed, and slept soundly. It was high noon the next day ere he arose.

Making a hasty toilet, he went down to dinner.

He did not linger long at the repast, for he was anxious to get out warrants for the three conspirators, and he knew he was already late.

They had had plenty of time to make good their escape, if they were disposed to leave the city.

As Dick was procuring a cigar at the hotel cigar-stand, he received a slap on the back, and wheeling, to his great astonishment he found himself in the presence of—Uriah Glen!

"Hello, young man! I reckon I've seen you before, hain't I? On the keers comin' tew Denver?" and the old man held out his horny palm in a friendly way.

"Yes, I believe I saw you on the cars," the detective answered, lighting his cigar. "Your name is Glen, isn't it?"

"You bet! I'm old Uriah Glen, from New York, and Uriah's all right, you bet your bottom dollar. Come and have su'thin', young man! I'm sort o' celebratin' this forenoon, ye see. I don't often do it, but I made a thunderin' big bargain yesterday, an' et deserves wettin'

up a little. Tell you what, they can't any of 'em beat old Uriah on drivin' a bargain, ef I am gettin' along in years!"

"You will really have to excuse me, Mr. Glen, but I have just been to dinner, and I never take anything so soon after eating," Dick declared.

"Fudge! nonsense! Come and take a glass of soda, if nothing more, jest fer sociability's sake," the old man urged, "and then we'll set down, and have a chat."

As Dick was anxious to hear what Uriah had done, he acquiesced, and they entered the bar-room.

Here Glen called for brandy while Dick took seltzer, for he could still feel the effects of the drug in his system.

They then went to the reading-room and sat down.

"Thar's one thing I wanted ter speak to you about," Uriah said, when they were seated. "They tell me at the office that you aire a detective?"

"Yes, a sort o' one," Dick assented.

"Yas. Well, now, I've got a leetle job to be did, an' if you can do it, I'll give you two dollars."

"Thanks for your liberality," Dick said, dryly, "but I don't happen to be a two-dollar man. I never pretend to undertake a job short of ten dollars."

"Huh! ye don't, eh? S'pose you wouldn't take eight?"

"Not a bit of it."

"Well, then, I s'pose I'll have to give you ten. You see, the case is this. I've got a daughter what is visitin' somewhere's around Denver, but I'll be bu'sted if I know jest where. She's visitin' a former schoolmate of hers, named Susie Lee, but I don't know where this Susie Lee lives. I did have the 'dress, but somehow or other I've lost it. D'y'e s'pose you could find out where my gal is stoppin'?"

"Yes. I have already called upon her and she is very much worried that you didn't come to see her, immediately upon your arrival in Denver."

"Jeminny! ye don't say so! Well, now, young feller, you're a trump. Jest tell me where to find the dear child, and I will go ter her at once. I orter have gone before, but I was too busy!"

"You will do nothing of the kind!" Dick said firmly. "Miss Glen has waited for you so long that she can wait a little longer."

"Huh!" and the old man stared at the detective over his glasses. "You talk as if you war runnin' things to suit yourself!"

"I am in a measure, so far as you are concerned," Dick bluntly assured. "When a man don't know no better than to deliberately make an ass of himself, it is about ti're that some one stepped in and interfered. Now, look here, Glen, I don't want you to get on your dudgeon because I am speaking pointedly to you, for I mean it for your own good. Unbeknown to you, and unsolicited, I have been working and spending my time in your behalf, trying to find you and prevent your being played for a sucker, and as a result I'm out two thousand dollars by the operation!"

"Huh! how's that?"

"Never mind how, just now. What I want to know, is about this real estate speculation of yours. You have invested, as you suppose, in a piece of property known as the Red Ranch, some forty miles from Denver?"

"Yes, and I've got the all-fired purtiest farm there is in the State, and got it at a tremendous bargain, too!"

"Yes? Have you seen this property you have purchased?"

"No, but they say it's a regular Garden of Eden. There's a thousand acres of it, an' there's a village an' a railroad station on the premises, an' the bull thing belongs to the purchaser o' the ranch!"

"How much did you pay for this property, old man?"

"Five thousand dollars. The price was ten thousand, but I Jewed the seller down, and he finally closed with me for five."

"You paid over the sugar—the money?"

"Sart'in!"

"Who sold you this property?"

"A real estate agent, named Michael Monk."

"Did you obtain a *deed* of the property?"

"No. The deed won't be ready until tomorrow. I got a receipt for my money, though."

And here the victim of the land-swindle drew a receipt from his pocket and handed it to Deadwood Dick.

It was dated at Denver, Col., and read:

"Received of Uriah Glen, five thousand dollars, in full of payment for one thousand acres of land in the State of Colorado, forty miles northwest of the city of Denver, on Lone Deer Creek, known as the Red Ranch.

"Signed, Maj. MIKE MONK,
"Dealer in Real Estate."

Dick handed the receipt back to Glen, with a sarcastic laugh.

"Put that away and be careful you don't lose it," he said. "It may make a millionaire of you, some day. Now, was there any one in Monk's office when you paid him this money?"

"Yes, a woman who calls herself Cool Kate. She's a cool 'un, too."

"Did she receive any part of the five thousand dollars?"

"No; but I paid her a hundred dollars, for helpin' me make the bargain!"

This was too much!

In spite of all efforts to keep a sober face, Dick roared.

"What ye laffin' at?" demanded Glen, not liking the detective's levity.

"Uriah, you're a fool!" Dick replied, as soon as he could choke off his laughter.

"Hey! what's that you say?" Glen demanded, angrily.

"I say you're a fool—an idiot—a consummate ass. You've been roasted!"

"Hub! roasted?"

"You bet!—and done to such a beautiful brown that ordinary brown paint would blush with shame. You've been skinned! you've been swindled! you've been done up to the tune of ten times more than the queen's own taste!"

"For heaven's sake, what do you mean?" demanded Uriah, who failed to comprehend this vocabulary of slang.

"I mean to say, sir, that you have been cheated out of your five thousand in the most approved fashion. The woman, Cool Kate, whom you met on the cars, picked you up for a greeny whom she could bleed of his money, and I'm blamed if she didn't do it. Mr. Glen, with all respect for your years, and your probable former good business record, I must tell you that you are not smart enough to do business in the far West."

The old man's countenance fell.

"Well, condemn my picture," he grunted, "if I can understand it all!"

"Well, then, I will make it plainer. In the first place, there is no place in all Colorado known as the Red Ranch."

"No place known as the Red Ranch? Why, man alive, I've got a map that shows just where it is, and all about it. You're mistaken, sir, you're mistaken."

"A fig for your map. That's merely a scrawl, got up and designed especially for your benefit, to mislead you, and make you believe they were offering you a regular bonanza. The tract of territory represented on that scrawl of a map, which is nowhere near geographically correct, is a barren rocky waste, with not enough soil, even, to plant beans in. If you are going into the stone masonry business you might, in the course of a hundred years from now, be able to declare a dividend on your investment."

Uriah Glen's jaw fell, and he groaned aloud.

"Good Lord!" he gasped, "can it be that I have been imposed upon in this shameful manner?"

"Just exactly that!"

"But, look here, detective, my former partner, Rufus Rice, he said the investment would be a splendid one, and recommended me to make it."

"Oh! of course. A good reason why. He was one of the conspirators, if, indeed, not the chief one; consequently he gets a whack out of the five thousand dollars you so willingly gave up for a pile of stone. Rufus Rice is a scoundrel and a thief. Listen! I suspected you would tumble into a trap when I overheard the conversation between you and Cool Kate, on the cars, and I resolved to save you from being skinned, if I could. So, on our arrival in Denver, I went to the city marshal, and made some inquiries, and, as a result, I found that there was no such property in the State as the Red Ranch, and I found, moreover, that Cool Kate was a notoriously crooked character, and I foresaw then what would become of your boodle if I could not find you; so, I set to work, and instituted a search for you. I examined the hotel registers; and even tried to pump out of Cool Kate some information of your whereabouts, but all to no avail. I then met your daughter, and asked her if you had any former acquaintances, now in Denver, and she told me of this man Rice, and said that he knew of your intention to come to Denver.

"So I visited Rice, and found that you had spent the previous night with him. He said he had put you in a hack and sent you off to see your daughter. I did not know whether to believe this statement or not; so I hung around the place to see whether or no you would not put in an appearance. Rice gave me a cigar to smoke, and it was drugged, and as a result, I became unconscious. When, finally, I regained my senses, in the dead of night, I found that I had been robbed of my money—over two thousand dollars, and of my gold watch, diamond pin and diamond ring. I managed to get out of the house, and came back to the hotel."

"So you see what sort of a man your former partner is."

Uriah held up his hands in horrified astonishment.

"Good Lord! what's this world coming to?" he ejaculated. Then, after a couple minutes of silence, he went on:

"Never mind, detective, never mind. I see clearly you've bin workin' in my interests, and have befriended me, when I didn't know it, and by the Jumpin' Jerusha, you sha'n't lose anything by it. I'll admit I've been a blamed fool, but Grandaddy Glen is better than two or three dead men, yet. The loss of five thousand dollars don't bu'st me by a long shot. I've got as much more along with me, and plenty more in New York if I need it. I'm powerful sorry, though, that you lost so much, an' ef we can't manage to git it back from them cussed thieves, I'll make it good to you out o' my own pocket; an' ef we can recover what I lost, half o' the amount is yours!"

"I'm afraid it is a vain hope, that of recovering the money," Dick said, dubiously. "The chances are ten to one that the conspirators have fled the town. However, there can be no harm in making an attempt to capture them, and I shall swear out a warrant for the arrest of Rufus Rice. If you like, you can take out warrants for Mike Monk and Cool Kate."

"I'll do it!" Uriah declared, "and, what's more, I'll go another thousand dollars for the capture of the hull three. This is a game of win or lose, an' I'm willin' to go a thousan' to put that gang in prison, even if we don't recover a cent!"

"Bully for you, grandpap!" Dick said, heartily. "I see you've still got some grit left in you, if you did get roasted. Well, come along, and we will pay a visit to the city marshal, and I'll get him to introduce us to the chief of police. If Kate Canda and her two pals are still in Denver, I'll make it so hot for 'em that they will think there's a chain of lightning after them!"

The two victims left the hotel, and hurried away toward the marshal's office.

CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER PIECE OF DEVILTRY.

FROM the hotel, Dick and Uriah Glen hurried to the office of the city marshal, on their way passing the office of Mike Monk.

"There! didn't I tell you?" Dick cried, pointing toward the shanty. "One of the birds, at least, has flown!"

The office was closed, the window being protected by tight board shutters. Upon the door was tacked a sign, "To Rent."

Grandfather Glen uttered something suspiciously like an oath as he beheld this sign.

"Durn my buttons ef you ain't right," he grunted. "The scalawag has skipped, - sure enough!"

"What will you take for your interest in Red Ranch, now?" Dick asked, dryly.

But grim silence was the only answer.

At that particular moment Uriah Glen did not have a very high appreciation of Colorado real estate.

The city marshal's office was reached, to find the official alone, so both entered.

The officer welcomed Dick cordially, and, after introducing Glen, Dick related their recent experiences.

"Bad business! bad business!" the marshal said. "There must be a stop put to this sort of thing. You wait here and I will lay the matter before the chief of police."

He then put on his hat and left the office.

He was gone perhaps half an hour, when he returned, accompanied by a portly individual, whom he introduced as the chief of the Denver Police Department.

Although the chief was a stern-looking man, who was capable of frowning a timid person out of countenance, he was pleasant-spoken and gentlemanly to a fault.

He at once put Dick "through a course of sprouts," in the way of questioning; but the

young detective's answers evidently satisfied the chief, for he said:

"Well, this isn't the first case of the sort that my attention has been called to. There are three others of a similar nature, and if I remember correctly, and I believe I do, this Cool Kate was a central figure in each case. While I have not much sympathy for the old man here, who is old enough to know better than buy a piece of property he never saw, that does not excuse the outrage perpetrated upon him, and I will try to have this rascally trio brought to justice. I suppose you will swear out warrants, Bristol?"

"Personally, I shall swear out a warrant for the arrest of Rufus Rice, on the charge of robbery!" Deadwood Dick replied. "Mr. Glen, here, I believe will swear out a warrant for the trio."

"Yes, and to such men as you put on the job, cap'n, I offer a thousand dollars' reward for the arrest and conviction of the ornery gang!" Uriah added, pounding on the floor with his cane by way of emphasis.

"All right, grandpap!" the chief replied. "I'll put Captain Riley and four of our best detectives on the case, and if we can catch this precious trio, the matter of conviction will be easy, and we may get your money back in the bargain. Don't take too much hope, however, for the chances are large that the whole three of them have left town. Now, there's a justice of the peace next door, and you and Bristol can go before him and swear out your warrants, and by the time you return I'll have Riley here. Marshal, please speak through the telephone and see if Riley is at Headquarters."

Accordingly, Dick and Glen sought the office of the justice, and had warrants issued for the arrest of Mike Monk, Kate Canda and Rufus Rice, on two charges—fraud and robbery—and Dick took a duplicate of each warrant for his own use.

They then returned to the marshal's office.

Captain Riley, a ferret-eyed fellow, was already there, and after he had been given the warrants and received instructions from the chief, Deadwood Dick and Uriah took their departure.

"There, I reckon we have done about all we can for the present," Dick said, when they were once more on the street, "except that I shall also keep an eye out for the game. If six of us wide-awake men can't trap the rogues, it's because they are not in the city. And now, Mr. Glen, I'll tell you what I want you to do. I'll take you to where your daughter is stopping, and, if possible, I want you to make some arrangements to stay there until we capture these crooks. Don't even venture out of doors unless accompanied by your daughter, and have nothing to say or do with any one you don't know, for this daring trio may make another attempt to bleed you. They evidently expected to get at least ten thousand dollars out of you, and something tells me they won't feel satisfied until they have made, at least, another attempt."

"All right, young man; I'll do just as you say—just as you say. Jeminetta! I'd like to have you get on good terms with my Goldie, for I don't know of another feller I'd rather have for a son-in-law than you."

Dick laughed.

"Well, I'll allow you've got a mighty good-looking daughter, Glen," he answered; "but just at present, I've no particular notion of buckling on the matrimonial harness."

In due time they reached the home of the Lees, and the negro servant answered the summons.

She recognized Dick, and at once invited him and Uriah to enter.

"De Missy Goldie am not in," she said, "but I spec's Missy Susie would like to see yo', fo' she am pow'ful worried."

"Very well; tell Miss Lee we will see her in the parlor," Dick ordered, and the woman hurried away.

"Something's gone wrong or Miss Lee would not feel 'worried,'" he mused. "Can aught have befallen Miss Goldie? Heaven forbid!"

They entered the parlor, and were scarcely seated when Susie Lee entered.

She was a tall, intellectual-looking girl, with a pale face, black eyes and raven hair, and might be classed with the fairly good-looking.

Her eyes now, however, indicated that she had been weeping.

"You are Mr. Bristol, the detective, are you not?" she asked, advancing toward Deadwood Dick.

"I am," Dick replied. "You are Miss Lee, I believe?"

"Yes, sir. I am so glad you came, for I

wanted to inquire about Goldie. I have been very much worried since she went away, and then, too, I had a terrible dream about her last night."

"Why, where has Miss Glen gone?" Dick quickly demanded.

"Oh, dear, I do not know. After she got your message last night she went away in the carriage to see her father, who you wrote was very ill."

"I wrote? Why, I have sent Miss Glen no message!" Dick cried, "nor have I seen Miss Glen since I called here yesterday. I suppose she told you of my call?"

"Yes, she told me, and she said you were going to try to find her father. Last night, about nine o'clock, a hackman brought a letter to her, purporting to be from you, saying that you had found Mr. Glen, but that he was very ill, and she should come with the driver, who would bring her to where her father was. So Goldie hastily put on her things and went off in the carriage. I should have accompanied her, only that there was no one home to mind the house. Besides, at the time, I had no suspicion but what all was right."

"By Heaven! this is another piece of deviltry!" Dick cried, excitedly, springing to his feet and excitedly pacing the floor, while poor old Uriah buried his face in his bandanna handkerchief, and burst into tears. "Without the slightest doubt, Miss Glen has been abducted, for I certainly sent her no message, nor did I send a carriage for her."

"Oh! then my worst fears are confirmed," Susie cried, wringing her hands. "If you would like to see it, Mr. Bristol, the message is up in Goldie's room."

"Yes, get it, by all means!" Dick replied, and Susie hurried away.

"Oh! God forgive me!" sobbed Uriah Glen, "for I am to blame for all this—yes, all to blame. If I had come to my daughter when I first arrived in Denver, this would not have happened."

"Your head is level there, Grandpap," Dick assented, grimly, "and you'd have been five thousand dollars better off to-day, in the bargain. But, don't break down now. If Goldie has really been abducted, we of course know at whose door to lay the crime. It was to extort the other five thousand dollars from you that she was carried off, and we shall hear from Cool Kate and Co., and in that way will not only be able to trap the three conspirators, but also recover your daughter. So cheer up."

"No, no! I shall never see my child again—I feel it, I know it! I shall never see my child again!" and the old man again gave way to his grief.

"Oh, cheer up! cheer up! I'll wager we have the girl restored to you before the week is out. Ah!"

Susie Lee re-entered the parlor just then, and handed Dick a letter, which was simply addressed to "Miss Goldie Glen," but the chirography was of an elaborate character.

In removing the letter from the envelope, a card fell upon the floor.

Picking it up, Dick was surprised to see that it was one of his own professional cards, viz:

"RICHARD M. BRISTOL,

"(Deadwood Dick, Jr.,)

"U. S. GOVERNMENT DETECTIVE."

"Ah! I see," he ejaculated. "Rice stole this when he robbed me of the money, and sent it along with this letter, to make the more apparent to Goldie that I sent the message. The scheming scoundrel, wait until I meet him!"

Opening the sheet of paper, he read the following:

"MISS GLEN.—I have just found your father, and he is very ill. I have sent this by a hackman. Come with him, and he will fetch you to where we are."

"Yours, R. M. BRISTOL."

"This is the work of Rufus Rice!" Dick decided, folding up the letter, and putting it in his pocket; "but, most likely it was suggested by Cool Kate, for if I mistake not she is the evil genius as well as the brains of the trio. Would you know the hackman, if you were to see him again, Miss Lee?"

"I think not!" Susie replied. "He didn't come in the house, and it was very dark, outside. All I could make out was that the man wore a black beard, and a big overcoat, and a slouch hat."

"Well, I mustn't tarry here. This matter must at once be reported to the chief of police, so that he can in turn notify Captain Riley. Miss Lee, have you accommodations for Mr. Glen?"

"Why, certainly," Susie replied. "We shall be only too glad to entertain Mr. Glen."

"No! no! I will go back to the hotel!" Uriah demurred. "I could not stay and my Goldie not here! Come, friend Bristol, let's go at once. I want to go back to the hotel!"

A strange change had suddenly come over him. He had dried his tears, and every trace of emotion had vanished. He was so perfectly calm, as he arose from his chair, with the brightness of youth, that Dick gave him a second glance.

There was a strange, burning intensity in the old man's eyes, that the detective did not like, and together with Susie he endeavored to urge him to remain at the Lee home; but Uriah was firm in his determination, and so the two men took their departure, Dick promising to inform Susie as soon as any news of Goldie's whereabouts was obtained.

"They went first to Police Headquarters, where Dick had an interview with the chief, and notified him of Goldie's abduction. Captain Riley chanced to be present, and promised that no stone should be left unturned to rescue Goldie, and apprehend the scoundrels.

Dick and Uriah then returned to the hotel, where the old gentleman was assigned a cheerful room, and as he, Glen, expressed a wish to lie down awhile, he was conducted to his room by one of the hall boys.

"I am seriously afraid the old man's mind will become unsettled if we don't find his daughter at once," Dick mused. "Heaven forbid, for, without his testimony, little could be done with Cool Kate, or Monk, if they are captured. Yes, if—that great big uncertain IF?"

CHAPTER XII.

"HEMLOCK HANK'S" LITTLE GAME.

AFTER Uriah Glen had gone to his apartment, Dick leaving instructions at the office that under no circumstances was any one to be shown up to the old man's room, left the hotel, and spent the remainder of the day in tramping about the city. He took a peep into every public resort he came across, but not a trace could he find of the parties he sought.

At last, when night came on, he returned to the hotel, tired and disgusted over his failure to pick up a clew.

He went up to Glen's room, and found the door unlocked; so he entered.

The old man lay upon the bed, tossing about in a high fever, and his moaning was something pitiful to hear.

Advancing to the bedside, Dick spoke to him, but his words were unheeded.

Uriah Glen was delirious.

Hastening down-stairs, Dick questioned the clerk and found that there was a reputable physician connected with the hotel, and he was at once summoned, and together he and Dick went up to Glen's chamber.

After a brief examination, the physician announced that the old man had a slight attack of brain fever.

"It's nothing very serious" he decided; "and as you called me in time, I shall be able to fetch him around all right. The most he needs is quiet, and quiet he must have. If you like, my son is a capital nurse, and we work so well together, that we can have your friend all right in a day or two."

"By all means have your son come, then," urged Dick; "and give Mr. Glen every necessary attention. I shall be absent a good deal, and am only too glad to be able to secure the services of a nurse for him."

And so it was arranged.

The doctor's son came and assumed full charge of the sick room, except the medical attendance, which his father furnished.

Dick thus relieved from duty, went down to the reading room, to think and rest, but had not been seated long when he was approached by a well-dressed, middle-aged man, of business-like appearance, whose most prominent characteristic was a huge, glossy brown beard.

"Are you Bristol?" he asked, abruptly, as he paused in front of the detective.

"Yes, I'm Bristol," Dick coolly replied, not fancying the man's manner of address. "What of it?"

"I've been looking for you, all the afternoon. I called to see Mr. Uriah Glen, on business, and was informed that I could not see him, without your permission!"

"The hotel clerk told you so, I presume?"

"He did."

"That was perfectly correct."

"Indeed? I don't understand, sir, why Mr.

Glen cannot be seen, without asking your permission!"

"Mr. Glen and his affairs are, at present in my charge, sir. What do you want of Mr. Glen?"

"I have a business matter to talk over with the old gentleman."

"Mr. Glen is too ill to talk over business matters!" Dick declared. "I am his representative, and if your business is of importance, it can be transacted through me!"

The much-bearded man frowned, at this, and turning away, strode up and down the room several times.

The detective watched him, curiously.

"I wonder who he is?" he mused. "I'll wager, his visit here relates to the kidnapping of Goldie. He evidently has been warned by the conspirators to fight shy of me, and is nettled over his inability to get an audience with the old man. Well, let him fume. I'll soon know what is up."

Presently the caller ceased his peregrinations, and once more came to a halt in front of the detective.

"Here's who I am," he said, extending a card, "and I think I am entitled to more civil treatment at your hands, than I have received."

"I am not aware that I have treated you uncivilly," Dick replied, as he glanced at the card and read the following:

"JEFFERSON HACK,
ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW."

"I simply told you that Mr. Glen was too ill to talk over business matters with any one, and so he is. He is suffering with an attack of brain fever, and is at present in the care of a doctor and a nurse!"

"I don't believe a word of it!" Hack declared, flatly. "I don't believe a word of it, sir!"

This "riled" Dick, in a minute.

"You are at liberty to do as you please about that," he replied. "I can inform you, however, that, were Uriah Glen ever so well, you could not see him, for I should interfere. Go back to the trio of thieves and blacklegs by whom you are employed, and tell them that if they want to make a deal, why they must apply in person to me. I'd like to have them do so."

"What do you mean, sir, by saying that I am employed by thieves and blacklegs?" Hack cried, fiercely. "Have a care, young man, or I'll call you to account for your insolence!"

"Call whenever the fit strikes you!" Dick retorted. "I mean what I said. You were sent here at the instance of a gang of thieves and blacklegs. You were sent here by Cool Kate, or one of her pals."

"I know nothing of Cool Kate, except by hearsay, nor one of her pals!" Hack replied. "So your accusation is unjust!"

"Do you deny that your mission to see Uriah Glen, concerns the kidnapping of his daughter?"

"I do not," Hack replied. He was silent a moment, and then, he added: "But I was not, knowingly, sent here by Cool Kate, or her pals. If you assure me that you are empowered to act for Mr. Glen, I suppose I may as well deal with you as him."

"I do assure you so, most certainly!" Dick replied. "During his illness I shall have Mr. Glen's business affairs under my personal supervision!"

"Very well!"

Hack took a seat beside the detective.

"This morning," he said, "while I was sitting in my office, a messenger boy brought me this—here he hand Dick a letter, which had been opened. In this letter, I found directions which occasioned my attempt to see Mr. Glen. If you will have the kindness to read the letter, you will readily see that I was not knowingly working in collusion with either Cool Kate or her gang!"

Dick drew the sheet of paper from the envelope, unfolded it, and here is what he found:

"MISTER HACK, LAWYER:—i want yu to dew A leetle bizness fur me. i Am a pore man Wat hes to hunt And Trap fur a livin'. i Spoze yu mebby hav heerd o' me. I'm Hemlock Hank, the trapper. a gal Has ben put in mi care. named Goldie Glen, & i hav bin instruekted tew collect five thousan' dollars fur her, afore i give her upp. Her dad is Rich an' kin 'ford to pay et. If he Won't, why I am goin' off inter the injun Country trappin', & i Will take her 'long, an' Sell her 2 sum injun Cheef. Now yu Go tu old Glen, whoze put Up at the — hotel, an' colleek the five thousan' kases, an' Then you drap a poastil keerd in the poast-Offus, sayin' yu've got the munny, & i will send a Man fur it, all xcept one Hundred dollers, w'ich you kin keepe fur yure trubbel. As sure as i git the munny, the Gal wil

be sent Back to denver, an' Not before. yu Tell old Glen if he Doan't pony upp Without any munky bizness, He wun't never sea hiz gal ag'in, fur sum injun Will hav herr fur a squaw.

"when Yu go tu sea Old Glen, beWare of a feller called Bristol, & doan't Let him suspect what Yure biznis is. he Iz a detecteeve. Now, you pleas 'tend Tu this mattor at Onct, & doan't firgot tu drap a poastil-carde, sayin' w'either you suckseeded in gitting The munny or not. If you Du git, when i send A man fur it, be Sure an' give It tu him.

"Yures Trooly, HEMLOCK HANK."

When he had finished reading this unique communication, Dick quietly folded up the letter and put it in his own pocket!

"Well?" Hack said, interrogatively, "what do you think of it, now?"

"Oh! I am not in the least surprised!" was the answer. "It is nothing more than I expected."

"You are satisfied, however, that I was not acting in collusion with Cool Kate and her pals?"

"Perhaps you were not, directly. Had you gained an interview with Uriah Glen, however, and had he been foolish enough to have paid you the five thousand dollars, you would have acted for this alleged Hemlock Hank, an imaginary character used as a subterfuge to screen Cool Kate and Company, and would have pocketed your one hundred dollars fee, without a twinge of conscience!"

"It is false!" Hack cried, hotly. "I would have advised Glen to put the matter in the hands of the police!"

"Excuse me a moment," Dick said, rising. "I just saw an old acquaintance in the office, I think. Wait here, and I will talk with you in a few minutes!"

He then left the reading-room.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN EASY CAPTURE.

THE old acquaintance whom the detective prince had seen was no acquaintance at all.

While talking with Hack, his gaze had been leveled through the arched opening between the reading-room and the office, and he had seen a man beckon to him, and then withdraw from view.

Hence the exit from the reading-room.

Reaching the office, the clerk motioned him to go into a small private office, and there he found the man who had beckoned to him—a short, thick-set individual, with remarkably keen eyes and a frowsy red mustache.

"You are Dick Bristol?" the man said, more positively than interrogatively, upon Dick's entrance.

"I am," Dick replied.

"I'm one of Cap Riley's men," the other said. "My name is Joe Sands."

"Ah! I'm glad to meet you. What's the news?"

"That depends! I don't know whether the other boys have scared up any game yet, or not, and I'm not sure that I have. Who's the man I saw you talking with?"

"He claims to be a lawyer."

"A lawyer, eh? What's his name?"

"Jefferson Hack. Here's his card!"

Sands glanced at the card, and then gave vent to a prolonged whistle.

"Jefferson Hack in me eye!" he ejaculated. "There is a prominent lawyer in Denver by that name, but the chap in the reading-room ain't him, by a long shot, though he's cleverly made up to look like the genuine Hack."

"I suspected he was an impostor," Dick said, "but had not got him drawn out to the point of being positive, up to the time you beckoned to me."

"What does he want?"

"Oh! he comes in reference to the girl!"

"I thought so. I've been watchirg him."

"Yes, he has been here several times during the afternoon, I understand, to see Mr. Glen, but as I had given orders that no one should be shown up to Glen's room, this fellow's visits were fruitless. Finally, however, he pounced upon me, and tried to bluff me, but, failing in that, he finally came around and made known his business. He claims that this morning, as he was sitting in his office, a messenger boy brought him this letter, and that his efforts to gain an audience with Uriah Glen was simply to investigate the matter."

Sands took the letter Dick gave him, and glanced it over; then, burst out laughing.

"That's good!" he said. "Catbarine ain't no slouch at hatching up schemes whereby she may possibly succeed in accomplishing her object, and yet take good care she does not expose her-

self. It's likely we may be able to trap this tricky trio, and secure the release of the girl, but between you and me, I wouldn't buy pools on the money that will be recovered."

"Just my idea, exactly," Dick agreed. "What do you think of this individual in the reading-room?"

"I think that he's our mutton!" returned Sands, emphatically. "There's another thing I think, too, Bristol, though I don't know whether you will cotton to it or not."

"Perhaps I will. What is it?" Dick asked.

"I was thinking that if we were to work shoulder to shoulder in this case, we'd get along much faster, and the chances are ten to one that we'd come out winners of the race, and distance the other boys. From what I've heard of you, you're a daisy at the business, and I ain't as slow as a snail, myself. You know the old saying—"two heads are better than one, if one is a sheep's head!"

"Right you are," Dick replied, "and I am heartily agreeable to your proposition. We'll join issues in the case, whether we win or lose!"

And then and there they shook hands by way of cementing the partnership.

"So you think this *pseudo* Jefferson Hack is a part of our game?" Dick queried.

"I do—in fact, I'm almost sure of it. If I'm not greatly mistaken, that man is Mike Monk, the 'skin' real estate agent."

"If it is that scamp, he is most cleverly disguised," Dick declared. "Monk, when I saw him, had red hair, and wore a tremendous red mustache."

"Of course, but the mustache could easily be cut off, and a false beard and a wig substituted."

"Well, maybe your suspicion is correct, but if the hair and beard of that chap is false, the wig-maker who disguised him is an artist and no mistake. What other reason leads you to suspect that he is Monk?"

"Well, I've been watching him. When Riley started me out, I took a tour around by Monk's quarters, and found his shop closed, and to let. This did not discourage me, however—no, sir, not by a jugful! I was onto that racket, at a jump. Monk has been carrying on a skin business there, for the past five years, and owns the property. Whenever he'd swindle any party pretty stiff, and there was danger of his getting yanked in, the shop was always closed, and for rent. When the danger had passed Monk resumed business again, same as usual."

"Well, when I saw the office closed up, I says to myself, 'Monk ain't far off,' and I crossed the street to a convenient beer saloon and waited. I spent two hours there, watching and waiting, and during the most of that time I saw your bogus Mr. Jefferson Hack loitering about the neighborhood. I allowed he was Monk, and at last, when I saw him go around to the rear of the office, my convictions were doubly strong. He was gone from view for some time, and then when he appeared, he started toward this hotel, and I followed him. I saw him enter here, make some inquiries of the clerk, and then come out again."

"Well, to make a long story short, I hung around this shebang all the afternoon, and if that chap went in and out once, he went a dozen times. At last I saw you enter, and he followed not long afterward, and as he did not come out again, I naturally concluded you were the fellow he had been looking for, so curiosity prompted me to enter the hotel and find if my surmise was right."

"Quite right. Well, from what you have told me, I should judge that there can be no doubt but what the man is really Major Mike Monk, cleverly disguised," Dick acknowledged.

"Yes; my mind is settled on that point."

"Well, I suppose we had better put him under arrest, eh?"

"That's the ticket. If he escapes us this time, we may not get a chance at him so easily again. Have you got a warrant?"

"Yes. Have you got a pair of handcuffs?"

"You bet! I'm never without them, or the nippers, either, for I tell you I've had some pretty tough customers to handle in my time."

"I presume so. Well, lets nab the fellow while there's time."

They left the private office, and entered the reading-room.

Hack had arisen from his seat, and stood with his back to the entrance to the room.

He was apparently studying a picture upon the wall, and his hands were clasped behind him.

This was the opportunity.

Deadwood Dick, to whom Sands had surren-

dered the handcuffs, stepped lightly and quickly forward and snapped the hancuffs about the man's wrists. Then, as Sands seized the prisoner by one arm, Dick, warrant in hand, stepped before him, and said in a clear, ringing voice:

"Michael Monk, so far as you are concerned, your game is up. In the name of the law, I arrest you for conspiracy and fraud!"

CHAPTER XIV.

TO THE DESERTED CABIN.

THIS arrest was such a surprise, that for some seconds the pseudo Jefferson Hack could not utter a word.

Finally, however, he burst forth in a torrent of maledictions and protest, at which the hotel proprietor and a number of guests, came swarming into the room, to see what the matter was.

"Here, here!" cried the proprietor, "what is the meaning of all this?"

"It means," replied Deadwood Dick, "that we have put this swindler under arrest, and he's working off his superfluous steam. Just wait a moment and I'll stop his chin-music with a gag."

At this threat the prisoner ceased swearing.

"Who is this man whom you have arrested?" demanded the proprietor.

"He is your fellow-townsman, the 'snide' real estate agent, Major Michael Monk," spoke up Joe Sands. "He's been up to his old tricks again, and we've got a warrant for him."

"It's false! it's false! My name is not Monk, nor never was," cried the prisoner, furiously.

"I think myself, gentlemen, that you have made a mistake," said the landlord. "I know Monk by sight, and this man bears not the slightest resemblance to him."

"Oh, that may easily be," Dick returned. "Before myself and partner made the arrest, the prisoner introduced himself to me as Jefferson Hack, a lawyer of this place. I will now leave it to you, sir, whether he is Hack or not, as I understand there is a lawyer of that name in Denver."

"Certainly he is not Jefferson Hack," the landlord replied, promptly. "I know Mr. Hack very well."

"Well, Mr. Prisoner, if you are neither Monk nor Hack, who next do you claim to be?" asked Dick.

"That's none of your business," was the savage reply.

"Oh, yes it is, for we are all curious to know," Dick persisted. "Sands, be kind enough to remove the prisoner's hat."

Joe obeyed, and then quickly seizing the beard, Dick gave it an upward jerk, and lo! off it came, and, attached to it a wig of like color, and—Mike Monk stood unmasked.

"By heaven, it is Monk, indeed!" exclaimed the landlord. "The deception was most remarkable."

"Of course it's Monk," Dick replied, "and I can assure you he won't monkey with real estate in Denver again for some time to come. The State owes a man of his vast ability a living, in exchange for so many hours' work per diem, and, as Monk has hitherto been too bashful to ask for his rights in this respect, the law will intercede in his behalf."

As for Monk, he said nothing, but a sullen, dogged expression settled upon his ugly countenance.

Joe Sands now held a whispered conversation with Deadwood Dick, and then left the room, Dick remaining to keep a vigilant guard over his prisoner, well knowing he would escape if the least opportunity offered.

"We will spare you the humiliation of walking through the street," Dick observed. "Sands has gone for a hack."

"How very considerate you are!" was the sneering response. "I wonder what you expect to make by arresting me?"

"We expect first, to make you tell where Goldie Glen is," Dick replied.

"Oh! do you? Well, you'll get left there! I ain't one o' the kind to give away secrets."

"Oh! ain't you? I rather guess we can put out enough inducements to make you tell," Dick replied. "You're a man who wouldn't stand prison fare long."

"Bah! prison fare nor prison cells have any terrors for me. I'd do a term any time before I'd betray a friend."

"You'll have a chance, no doubt, to put your devotion to the test. You're a fool, however, to go to prison when you can avoid it."

"When I can avoid it?" Monk echoed.

"Certainly — by turning State's evidence

against Kate Canda and Rufus Rice, and aiding us to recover the money and Glen's kidnapped daughter."

Monk shrugged his shoulders, and showed his teeth in a disagreeable smile.

"If you wait until I do, you'll have a good time waiting, my sharp fellow," he said. "I'm not one of the sort to peach on a customer or friend."

"Then, so much the bigger fool are you!" Dick declared. "You are arrested, and State's Prison stares you in the face. Who is going to come forward and help you? Your pals? Not much! They'll have no further use for you. With you safe in prison, there will be more booty to divide up between Cool Catherine and her friend Mr. Rufus Rice!"

Monk scowled, but made no reply. There was more truth than fiction in what Dick assumed.

"How much of the five thousand dollars did you get for your share in the swindle?" Dick asked.

"I have got none of it!" was the reply.

"What, no divvy yet? Then Cool Kate has got all the boodle, eh?"

Monk refused to answer, and nothing could be determined by the sullen, inscrutable look on his bull-dog-face.

Joe Sands now re-entered and announced that the hack was waiting; so, taking Monk by the arm, the two detectives marched him out of the hotel and put him in the waiting conveyance.

There his feet were bound, to prevent his jumping out; then the two captors got in the coach, with their prisoner, and it was driven away at full speed.

For several minutes after leaving the hotel, not a word was spoken by either captive or captors, but it soon became apparent that Monk was ill at ease, for he shifted around in his seat, and acted as if he was uncomfortable.

"Are you taking me to jail?" he asked, after awhile.

"Where else do you suppose?" Dick replied. "Jail is the place for you, isn't it?"

"No. I don't deserve to be locked up. Kate Canda is to blame for that Red Ranch business."

"You drew up the map, didn't you?"

"Well—yes."

"And you made the sale!"

"Kate helped. The old moke wouldn't have paid as much as he did if it hadn't been for her."

"You took the money, didn't you?"

"Yes, but I afterward had to transfer every cent of it to Kate."

Then there was another lag in the conversation.

It would be well to make the coach leave the main road in the direction of the Platte River, as that was the only place where fuel wood could be had or any likelihood of a log-cabin along the river-bottoms.

Mike Monk noticed the fact.

"See here!" he cried, "where are you taking me? This is not the way to the station-house!"

"Perhaps not!" spoke up Joe Sands. "Perhaps we're going to a worse place than that, for all you know. But, you hadn't ought to kick. You ought to be glad you haven't a halter around your neck!"

"I want to know where I'm going?" Monk demanded, waxing furious, and at the same time becoming not a little alarmed. "You've arrested me, and you have no right to take me anywhere but to the station-house!"

"This is not a question of right or of wrong!" Sands replied. "We've got you, and we shall do as we please with you. Our purpose is to learn from you the hiding-place of Cool Kate and Rufus Rice, and where Goldie Glen is held a captive. If you conclude to act sensibly, and give us the information we desire, you will be set at liberty after we have captured your two pals, and rescued the girl, and will be given an opportunity to escape from the State. On the other hand, if you prefer to be stubborn and mulish, we shall force you to give us the information we desire. So you see, it will all depend upon yourself, the treatment you receive!"

"Well, all I've got to say, is—you'll have a good job trying to force me to do or say what I don't want to!" Monk replied, grimly, the expression of bulldog determination growing stronger.

The hack rolled on, without a halt, for perhaps an hour longer, during which time its occupants maintained an unbroken silence. "But at length it came to a halt, in front of an isolated log-cabin, which stood back from the Platte River road among a clump of trees.

The cabin evidently was deserted.

"Ah! here we are!" Joe Sands exclaimed, as the vehicle drew up before the door. "This is the place where old 'Bijah Bush and his wife were murdered three years ago. No one comes nigh the place any more, because they say old 'Bijah's ethereal float has a habit of moseyin' about the premises at all kinds of unseemly hours. By the way, Monk, if I remember correctly, it was hinted at the time of the murder, that you knew more about it than you chose to tell!"

Monk compressed his lips tightly, and made no answer, but there was a strange look in his eyes, and the ruddiness of his face had noticeably lessened, while a grayish pallor had taken its place.

"Well, we get out here," Sands announced. "Bristol, if you will lend me a hand, we will carry our corpus into the cabin."

Sands got out of the hack and seized Monk by the feet. Deadwood Dick followed, lifting the head and shoulders, and thus the unlucky real estate agent was borne into the lonely cabin, the hack-driver having volunteered to open the door.

Monk was deposited in a sitting position on the floor; then Dick ordered the driver to return in two hours' time, and the man mounted the vehicle and drove off, as if glad to be well away from that vicinity.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAJOR "CAVES."

SANDS now produced a bull's-eye lantern, and lighting it, he hung it upon a peg in the wall. By its light a good view of the interior of the cabin could be obtained. There was but one room, and the walls were unplastered, the chinks between the logs being filled up with clay.

Of furniture, there was none, and the floor was covered with a thick coating of dust.

After the departure of the driver, Dick and Sands held an undertoned conversation, but Monk could not catch the drift of it. That it concerned him, or his disposal, he had no doubt.

When the detectives had come to an understanding, they went out of doors, and began gathering and carrying fuel into the cabin.

In a short time they had collected a goodly quantity, and then a rousing fire was started upon the hearth of the one big chimney. Major Mike watched these proceedings with nervous curiosity.

As yet, it had not dawned upon his mind that there was any significance in these preparations, but, he was not destined to remain in ignorance long.

When the fire had been got to burning in good shape, Joe Sands surveyed the prisoner, a couple of minutes in silence. His face was stern and pitiless.

"Mike Monk!" he said, "do you know me?"

"No, nor I don't want to," was the gruff reply.

"I will take the trouble to refresh your memory. I knew you when you were in Kansas City before you had to skin out of the State for crookedness."

Monk winced, but made no answer.

"You were in the real estate business then. You sold a farm to my father, and took a mortgage on it. My father was Deacon Sands, a hard-working, upright man. Ah! I see you remember him, you villain! Well, I'm Joe Sands, his son, and I've been waiting for this chance to get square with you. When the mortgage came due, in the dead of one of our bitter Kansas winters, my father could not meet the payment. What did you do? Why you wouldn't give us a show, but took possession without foreclosure, as the terms of the mortgage permitted you to do, and turned us out in the cold to perish, although you knew your money was safe."

"We didn't perish then, thanks to my strong arms, and stronger will; but my father took a severe cold, that eventually handed him down to his grave, and until she died, rheumatism made my mother a helpless cripple."

"Now, sir, do you think I ought to have any mercy on a man like you? I reckon not! I am not one who believes in capital vengeance, but I'm going to force you to tell where Cool Kate, Rufus Rice, and Goldie Glen can be found, or I'll torture you until there is but a single breath left in your ugly body!"

Monk shivered perceptibly as he heard this threat, uttered as it was by a man who undeniably meant just what he said, but the sullen, hang-dog look of unalterable resolution did not vanish from his face.

Deadwood Dick, who had been standing near the fire-place, now came forward.

"Well, Monk," he said, "you've heard Mr. Sands's edict. You will have to yield, or suffer the tortures of the damned! Now, everything is in readiness, and we shall not mince matters. Either you make a clean breast of it or you suffer. Therefore, I ask you, will you tell us where we can find Kate, Rice, Goldie Glen, and the money, or will you not?"

"No, I'll not!" Monk declared, doggedly. "What are you going to do with me?"

"We're going to loosen your tongue," replied Joe Sands, grimly. "A man's tongue sometimes gets out of order and won't work, owing to cold feet. When the feet are sufficiently heated the tongue becomes pliable, and the patient can talk with ease. Bristol, please remove Mr. Monkey's right boot and sock, and I will attend to the left!"

In a moment the boots and socks were removed, and Monk's feet were as bare as those of a new-born babe.

A stifled groan escaped the prisoner as he comprehended the kind of torture he must endure if he refused to come to the detective's terms; but his iron will was still unsubdued, and shutting his teeth hard together, he closed his eyes and waited, as the two detectives dragged him forward, and shoved his feet so close to the fire that the leaping blaze almost licked the bottoms of them.

For a few seconds Monk did not stir; then he began to writhe and twist, and finally a most terrific yell pealed from his lips.

"Stop! stop!" roared the wretch. "I cave! I cave!"

At which Deadwood Dick smiled, while he and Joe Sands promptly dragged the major back from the fire-test.

Then he was assisted to a sitting position.

"Well, is your tongue limber enough to talk?" Joe Sands demanded.

"Yes, it is! Just give me a chance to get my breath, and I'll tell you all. Jerusalem! if that was a foretaste of hell, excuse me! I'll take the other route."

"Well, you know the old saying: 'It's never too late to mend!'" Dick said. "If you take a new tack in your sails, and head for the right goal, there's no reason why you should not in a measure redeem your name—for, most likely, you once had a good reputation—and no longer stand in fear that the strong arm of justice will reach out and seize you in its clutch!"

"I believe you said if I revealed all, you would give me a show to skip the town and State?" Monk observed.

"Yes, after we have arrested Cool Kate and Rufus Rice, and rescued Miss Glen and recovered the money."

"I don't think it's fair to put in that last clause!" demurred the prisoner, "for, how am I to know but the money has been so disposed of that you can't recover it? I am willing to tell you all I know, but it would be simply useless for me to assure you that you can recover the money, when I don't know that you can."

"Well, we will waive that clause. Now, then, where are Cool Kate and Rufus Rice?"

"Do you want me to show you?"

"No. You will remain in confinement, here, until after they are captured."

"Not alone, I hope!" Monk quickly cried, turning to an ashen hue. "Lord a'mighty! I wouldn't stay in this ghost-trap, alone, for all the money in Christendom!"

"No, you need not necessarily stay alone. Indeed, we could not think of leaving you alone, until we have secured your two pals. One of us will remain with you, so you need have no fear that 'Bijah Bush's ghost will lay his clammy claws upon you. But, you have not answered yet."

"Well, I'll answer. On E— street, in the southern part of the city, you will find three four-story brick buildings that have been put up recently. They are built together, and are designed for apartment-houses. The numbers are 427, 429, and 431. Number 429, of course, is the middle building. The fourth floor of this building is occupied by Rufus Rice, and his wife, Cool Kate, whom he married, over a week ago."

"Aha! so the precious pair are really married, eh?"

"Yes. I was a witness to the ceremony, and so I can vouch for it that they are really married. I can tell you another thing, too: They knew of Uriah Glen's intention to come to Denver a week beforehand, knew to the minute when he left New York, and Kate's meeting with him on the cars was not accidental, as it might have appeared, but was planned ahead."

"But, to return to the apartment house. The floor occupied by Rice and Kate is the only one in the three buildings that is tenanted, and con-

sequently they are quite isolated from the world for the present, and if there is any undue noise, there is no one to notice it. It is there that Glen's daughter is held in captivity."

"Ah! all right. We will soon have her at liberty, then," Dick said. "But, look here, Monk, are you giving us a straight story? If you ain't, it will go hard with you."

"I hope I may never draw another breath if I'm not telling you the truth. If they ain't there when you pay the place a visit, why, they've become alarmed and fled. They were there two hours before I met you at the hotel."

"Now, to assure you that I am sincere, I will tell you something else: There is but one doorbell to Number 429, but there is a janitor on duty who occupies the lower floor back room. He answers all bells, and if you want to see the present tenants you will have to ask for Mr. or Mrs. La Rue, and he will direct you to the top floor. When you arrive at the top of the stairs, the door in front of you is the right one. First four distinct raps; then, after a second's pause, give two, and you will be admitted."

"If you can rig yourself out as I was when you captured me, you will have no trouble in getting into the presence of one or both of the parties you want."

"All right! I'm pleased to obtain this information, and you will be treated accordingly. If you had told us this before, you'd have saved yourself a foot-warming."

Dick then turned to his partner.

"Sands," he said, "I'll leave the rest to you. When the hack returns, you can go back to Denver and wind up matters, and I will remain here."

"Not by a long shot!" Sands replied. "You were the first one to tackle the case and give it a push, and to you belong the honors of the victory. You are an adept at disguising yourself, I have heard, and so you go back to Denver and wind up the little ball of yarn, and I will remain here and keep old Bush's spook from tormenting the major."

"Very well," Dick replied; "just as you say, not as I care. But, remember, if we get any remuneration for our services, we share and share alike."

So Dick prepared to return to the city.

He had plans already formed in his mind for the capture of Rice and Cool Kate, and felt that victory was but a few hours off at the furthest.

The hack returned to the cabin at the appointed hour, and springing to a seat beside the driver, Dick ordered him to drive to Denver in the quickest possible time.

CHAPTER XVI.

LUCK IN A TEAPOT—THE RESCUE.

DENVER reached. Dick was driven direct to the hotel, where he paid and dismissed the hackman, and hurried up-stairs.

It was now eleven o'clock and if he hoped to visit Rice and Cool Kate that night, he must be expeditious. During his wanderings that day, he had passed through E— street, and by the very buildings Monk had described, so knew he could walk the distance in ten minutes.

On going up-stairs, he glanced into Uriah Glen's room, and found the doctor's son there in charge, and the sick man resting easily, under the influence of an opiate.

Dick then hurried on, to his own chamber.

From among his always literal stock of disguises, he selected an outfit that closely corresponded with that worn by Mike Monk, and was out a few minutes in donning this. He then armed himself, and also stowed away in his pocket two pairs of handcuffs, and a bottle of amber-colored liquid.

Thus equipped, he left the hotel, and hurried away.

Not until he entered a dark street did he adjust the wig and beard to his head and face.

In ten minutes' time he had entered E— street, and as he leisurely approached No. 429, he saw by the aid of the light from a neighboring lamp that a man was standing in the doorway, and, as he came a little closer, he had no difficulty in making out that it was Rufus Rice.

"Hello! there!" cried Rice, from the doorway. "Is that you, Mike?"

"I reckon it ain't anybody else," Dick returned gruffly, mimicking Monk's tone of voice as nearly as possible.

"You've been a thunderin' long time," Rice declared. "I've been waiting here, for over two hours, and both myself and Kate have been worried for fear something had happened. How'd you make out?"

"Didn't make out, at all!"

"Why, what's the matter?"

"D'ye want me to blab it out here, for the benefit of the whole neighborhood?" Dick growled.

"Certainly not. Come along up-stairs."

"Hold up! Have you got anything to drink up there, for if you ain't, I'm going somewhere to get a bottle, for I'm dry's a fish, and pretty near fagged out."

"Yes, I've got a bottle of old Cognac that's never been opened. So come along."

They entered the hall, and Rice closed and locked the door behind them.

He then took the lead, and they groped their way up three flights of unlighted stairs to the fourth floor, where Rice opened a door, and they entered a room, dimly lighted by a candle. This room was noticeable for its scarcity of furniture, what little there was consisting only of an old lounge, a common deal table, three wooden chairs, an apology of a stove, and an old cupboard.

Seated at the table was Cool Kate, engaged in reading a loudly illustrated New York paper.

She looked up and nodded as she saw Dick, who flung himself down on the lounge.

"Well, Mike, what's the news?" she demanded. "How did you make out?"

"I didn't make out at all. I've been on the canter ever since noon, but hain't accomplished anything and I'm clean tuckered out."

"Tell us about it. We've been mighty worried about you."

"Well, when I got to the hotel, I found that old Glen was sick abed with brain fever, and under the doctors, and that fellow, Bristol, had given orders to have no one see the old man without his permission. I had set out to win and wasn't to be knocked in that way; so I set about trying to find Bristol. If I visited the hotel once, I went there a dozen times, but it was not until an hour ago that I succeeded in getting my hooks on him."

"To my demand to see Glen, he planked down a blank refusal, stating he was Glen's business representative, and that if I had any business to transact, I could transact it with him.

"I thought the matter over, and came to the conclusion that there was no probability of my securing an audience with the old hunk for days to come; and I tell you delays are dangerous, for Riley and his detectives are scouring the city in search of us."

"So I tackled the detective and showed him the fake letter, telling him I was Jefferson Hack and had received the letter from a messenger-boy. He read the message over several times, but didn't act as if he had any suspicions in regard to its authenticity."

"After he had read the letter over several times he said that he could not give me any answer to-night, as it was too late, and Glen had been put to sleep under the influence of an opiate, but added that if Glen was able to talk in the morning he would have a consultation with him, and I could call for my answer about ten o'clock. He furthermore said that Glen's recovery depended a great deal on his daughter being restored to him, and hinted that it was possible we could come to some terms."

"Ah! then the prospects of our making another haul out of the old moke are favorable?" Cool Kate said, eagerly.

"I think so," the pseudo Mike answered. "If we can't corral that other five thousand we're all right. By the way, Kate, when am I to get my divvy out of the first haul? I'm gettin' sick of working for nothing."

"To-morrow night," Cool Kate replied. "I've got nearly all the large bills converted into smaller money, and shall finish to-morrow, and then the division will take place."

"All right, see that it does, for I'll be blamed if I ain't getting tired of working for nothing and boarding myself. Say, Rice, you said you had a bottle of Cognac. Why don't you trot it out, and let's have a horn? I'm as dry as a salt mackerel ten days out o' water!"

"Yes, Rufe," spoke up Cool Kate; "let's all have a drink to success to-morrow."

Rice placed three glasses on the table; then, going to the cupboard, he brought forth a bottle of brandy, the seal of which had not yet been broken.

To uncork this was but the work of a moment, and he then poured each glass two-thirds full.

Before either of the trio could drink their liquor, they were startled by a woman's scream, coming from some other room on the fourth floor.

"It's that cussed girl again!" Rice cried. "Light another candle, Kate, and come along."

If she don't shut up her noise she'll have the police down on us. Mike, you stay here until we return."

"Mike" very naturally assented to this proposition, for it would give him the very chance he most wanted.

Kate, lighting a fresh candle, followed her husband into the adjoining room, the door closing behind them.

Dick heard then cross that room and enter another.

He waited no longer, but arose from the lounge, and drawing the little amber-colored bottle from his pocket, poured fifteen drops of its contents into Kate's glass of brandy, and thirty drops into Rice's glass.

Then, putting the bottle back into his pocket, he took his own glass of liquor and returned to the lounge.

He was not a minute too soon either, for Rice and Cool Kate returned to their kitchen almost immediately afterward.

"What's the difficulty?" Dick asked.

"Oh, it's that confounded girl!" Cool Kate replied. "She's got the hysterics, or something of the sort, because we've got her shut up. I wish old Glen would hurry up and fork over the cash, so we could get rid of her, for she's a nuisance."

"Well, I reckon when I see Bristol again I can fix matters up all right," Dick assured. "So, here goes! Let's down with the spirits that make the spirits rise!"

They each drank their liquor, and then Dick yawned sleepily.

"I don't know when I ever was so tired before," he said. "I'm clean fagged out. What do you say to my bunking down here on the lounge for the rest of the night? I don't care to go back to my old boarding-place, for fear detectives may be watching for me."

"You are sensible," Rice assented. "Of course you can have the lounge, provided you can manage to sleep there. If the girl gets to screeching during the night, go into the second room from this, toward the front of the flat, and lambaste her with a whip which you will find in the next room. My wife and I occupy a little room here, off the kitchen, and we can't hear her."

"All right. If she disturbs me, I'll mighty quick make her shut up!" Dick replied, as he stretched himself out on the lounge, with his face to the wall. "I'm off, now, for a visit to Morpheus."

It was fully five minutes ere the young detective turned over, facing the table, and then it was only because he heard a fall.

Rufus Rice, totally overcome by the drug, had tumbled off his chair, and lay sprawling upon the floor. Cool Kate was also in the act of falling, when Dick sprung and caught her, and laid her upon the floor.

The subtle drug had done its work well, and the precious pair of schemers were totally oblivious of everything, either in the way of sin or sorrow.

"Ha! ha! I hold the winning hand at last!" Dick exclaimed in triumph. "Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Rice are booked for four hours of deep sleep, at the very least, and before that time I'll have them under lock and key in the station-house. Now, let me see, what shall I do first? I reckon the money is about the most important thing, next to Miss Goldie, and I guess she won't spoil if she waits a few minutes."

So the detective proceeded to turn Rice over on his back, and encircle his wrists with a pair of "legal bracelets"—handcuffs.

Then he searched his pockets.

The result was highly gratifying, for, not only did Dick recover the money that had been stolen from him, but he also got back his gold watch, and his diamond-ring and pin.

"Aha!" he exclaimed. "Now, if I am only as lucky in searching Cool Kate, I'll be all right."

But, when he came to handcuff and search the Queen of Crooks, he found that his luck had deserted him, for she had only about ten dollars on her person!

Where, then, was the five thousand?

"It must be about the premises, somewhere!" Dick muttered. "I hardly think she'd bank it, for fear she couldn't get it out again. I must make a thorough search."

Lighting a candle, of which there were a plenty, upon the mantle, Dick entered a little room opening off the kitchen, which Rice had indicated as being his own and Kate's sleeping apartment.

The only furniture in that room was a bedstead, and upon this was a mattress, and the necessary bedclothes.

Dick examined the mattress and the bedding carefully, but without a clew to the whereabouts of the missing money.

"Well, I'll be blowed if this ain't provoking," he mused, as he left the bedroom. "I feel sure that money is secreted somewhere about these premises, but where? Ah! there's the old cupboard! Maybe that contains the treasure. It won't do any harm to give it an inspection, anyhow."

So he began the renewed search. The interior of the cupboard contained three shelves, but only one of them was in use. The others were bare.

The occupied shelf held some table dishes, earthenware, and cooking utensils.

Everything having a cavity did the detective thoroughly investigate, until he came to a bright, new tin teapot, that evidently had never been used.

On raising the lid of this, however, Dick uttered an ejaculation of surprise and delight.

There, stowed away in the teapot, "snug as a bug in a rug," was a large roll of money.

Hastily extracting it from the novel receptacle, Dick seated himself at the kitchen table and proceeded to count it over.

When he had finished, he found that he had exactly five thousand and one hundred dollars—the precise amount Uriah Glen was out of pocket through being too gullible, viz: \$5,000 for the alleged Red Ranch, and \$100 to Cool Kate for "assisting" in making the bargain.

"Aha! victory is mine, and I have cause to be proud of it!" Dick cried triumphantly, as he rolled up the money and put it away in his pocket. "Now then, I'll tie my captives' feet so they can't get up and pedestrianize; then I'll rescue Miss Glen, and take her to the hotel; then, last but not least, I'll hunt up Riley, and we'll come and take our prisoners to the place,

"Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the food is none the best!"

To bind the feet of the prisoners was but the work of a few minutes. Then Dick removed his hirsute disguise, and, taking the candle, passed into the room he had seen Kate and Rice enter.

It was unfurnished.

Crossing to a door opposite, he found a key in the lock, and turning it, he threw the door wide open.

This room also proved to be unfurnished, and without windows or other visible ventilation.

Lying upon the floor, with her head pillowed upon her arm, soundly sleeping, was Goldie Glen. She had evidently cried herself asleep.

Walking over to her, Dick gently shook her.

"Miss Glen! wake up!" he called.

She opened her eyes; then, as she saw the candle, sprung to her feet, with a startled cry!

"Who are you? What do you want?" she cried.

"I am Dick Bristol, Miss Glen. Don't you know me?"

"You—you—oh! yes, you are Mr. Bristol, the detective—and—and you have come to rescue me! Oh! God be praised, for He has answered my prayer. Oh! sir, please take me from this awful place, at once."

"That's what I'm here for," Dick replied. "Please put on your hat and coat, and I'll have you out of the wilderness in a jiffy!"

Goldie lost no time in following directions.

"Tell me of my father," she said, while putting on her things. "Have you found him yet?"

"Oh! yes. He turned up all right, and is at the hotel, where I am going to take you."

Dick also explained to her how he had captured Cool Kate and her husband, and how he should have them locked up as soon as he had taken her to the hotel.

Goldie being ready, they made their way to the kitchen, and thence down-stairs, Dick carrying the candle to light the way.

When they were in the vicinity of the front door, the burly janitor stepped forward, lantern in hand, and blockaded their passage.

"Look here!" he cried, in a gruff voice, "I want to know what's the meaning of this gad-din' in and out at this hour of night. We don't allow it in this house!"

"Oh! you don't eh? Who are you, pray?"

"I'm the janitor of these buildings, sir, and what I say goes!"

"And I am an officer of the law—a United States detective—and I come and go as I please!" Dick declared. "This young lady has been a prisoner in the power of the two criminals to whom you rented the upper floor—two of the worst blacklegs in the city—and I have been to her rescue. If you will take the trouble to

climb to the fourth floor, you will find your worthy tenants bound and handcuffed. They are my prisoners, and I have warrants for both of them. As soon as I conduct this young lady to a place of safety, I shall return with officers to take charge of the prisoners. Until then, you being janitor of these premises, I shall hold you individually responsible for their safe-keeping. Have the kindness to open the door, and be at your post, on my return!"

The janitor gave vent to a prolonged whistle of astonishment, and turning mechanically, he unlocked and opened the door, and allowed Dick and Goldie to pass out.

That so young a looking personage as Dick should be an officer of the law, was evidently beyond the watchman's comprehension.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

THE hotel was reached, Dick registered for Goldie, and had a room assigned to her; then he conducted her to her father's room, where he left her, and, taking a cab, he was driven to Police Headquarters, only to find that Captain Riley had just gone home for the night.

"Can't help that," Dick said to the night captain on duty at the desk. "I must have him, for I've got two prisoners already bagged for him. Ring him up at once."

"There ain't much use of that," the officer replied, "for he won't come."

"Oh, yes, he will! Tell him Bristol wants him, and you'll see him trotting in here as soon as he can cover the distance."

"Tell you what I'll do," said the genial officer. "I'll go you a bottle of Piper-Sec that you don't see Riley before morning."

"It's a go," Dick assented. "Ring up Riley."

The captain turned to the telephone, and in a few seconds opened up communication with the local chief of detectives.

When he returned to his desk, there was a rather sickly grin upon his countenance.

"It's all right," he said. "Call around tomorrow, when I'm off duty, and we will have it across the way, at the *cafe*, for Riley will be here, confound his unaccommodating picture!"

While Dick simply uttered that perennial and provoking—

"I told you so!"

Riley arrived, a quarter of an hour later, in breathless haste.

"Have you got onto their trail?" was the first question.

"Worse," Dick replied. "I've bagged two of 'em—Cool Kate and Rice—and all that's required is an escort to conduct them to the station-house. Bring along a quartette of men, and a couple hand-carts, and we'll be all right."

"What do you want of the hand-carts?"

"Well, you see, in order to effect the capture, I had to drug 'em. I reckon they won't be much good for a walkin' match, for some hours yet!"

"Oh! I see. Did you find the girl?"

"Yes, and rescued her. She's safe at the hotel."

"Good for you!"

"I recovered every cent of the money, too," Dick added—"both my own, and Glen's."

"Is that so? I had no idea that any of the money would be recovered. Bristol, you're a daisy. You must join our force!"

Dick laughed. "I reckon not. I couldn't content myself in one place for any great length of time. As the earth moves, Nature evidently intended that I should keep a-moving."

"How about Mike Monk? Any hope of getting him?"

"No. From what I have learned he's out of the reach of the law."

The captain then ordered four men detailed to accompany him.

They were at once furnished, and, headed by Dick and Riley, the little party started for E—street, two of the officers bringing hand-carts with them.

As it was in the dead of night, the procession attracted no attention, there being no one abroad except the patrolmen, to see it.

When No. 429 was reached, the janitor admitted the party, and they at once ascended to the fourth floor, where, to Dick's surprise, he found that both Cool Kate and Rufe Rice had recovered consciousness, and had nearly succeeded in freeing their feet from the cords that bound them together.

In five minutes more they would have had full use of their legs, and would probably have made good their escape from the house, and from the city.

When Cool Kate saw the detective and the policemen, she was furious.

Rice, however, kept a close mouth and said nothing.

Of course the hand-carts were brought into play.

Dick and Riley wheeled them back to Headquarters, while the four officers escorted the prisoners.

Cool Kate was inclined to be ugly, and had to be dragged along until the officers got out of patience, and put the nippers on her wrist; then she walked along as meek as a lamb.

In half an hour after leaving the tenement, the two crooks were safely under lock and key, in the station-house.

On the following day Dick drove out to the Bush cabin, where he found Sands and Mike Monk as he had left them.

When Dick related the successful capture of Kate and Rice, the rescue of Goldie and the recovery of the money, Monk wept tears of joy, and expressed himself heartily glad that matters had turned out as they had.

"For," said he, "I have resolved that, when you set me free, I will go to some other State where I am not known, and begin life anew, and henceforth be a better man!"

"May you keep that resolution firm!" Deadwood Dick encouraged.

Monk was accordingly released, and Dick gave him fifty dollars to enable him to get out of the State.

The two detectives then shook hands with him, bade him good-by, and drove back to Denver.

The trial of Cool Kate and Rufus Rice was postponed for a week, until Uriah Glen was sufficiently recovered from his illness to appear as a witness.

They were then arraigned, and the prosecution presented such an overwhelming amount of evidence against them that the jury brought in a verdict of guilty without leaving their seats.

Rice received the lighter sentence of the two, owing to the fact that he conducted himself quietly during the trial.

Cool Kate received a "scorcher," and when she is again a free woman, if she lives out her sentence, her hair will undoubtedly be liberally streaked with gray.

Uriah Glen was as good as his word, and half of his recovered wealth he presented to Deadwood Dick, in recognition of his services, and Dick in turn "went halves" with his new pard, Joe Sands.

The Glens have returned to Gotham, and if you want to raise Uriah's ire, just praise within his hearing the virtues of Colorado real estate.

Dick and Joe Sands are gunning around, up in Idaho, where doubtless we shall meet them again.

THE END.

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